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Restoring Porosity and the Ecological Crisis: a post-Ricoeurian reading of the Julian of Norwich Texts

Foster-Gilbert, Claire Margaret

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**RESTORING POROSITY AND THE ECOLOGICAL CRISIS: A
POST-RICOEURIAN READING OF THE JULIAN OF NORWICH
TEXTS**

Claire Foster-Gilbert

PhD Thesis

Thesis Abstract

This thesis seeks to answer the question: can the Julian of Norwich texts be read today in such a way that they can help address the twenty-first century ecological crisis, by transforming our ‘buffered’ subjectivity into the ‘porous’ subjectivity Julian brought to and learnt from her revelations?

The thesis argues that the stresses on the planet that are caused by humanity are themselves symptoms of an underlying human subjectivity enslaved by *Gestell*, the ‘essence of technology’, defined by Heidegger, which turns nature and humanity itself into objects to be exploited. This underlying ‘buffered’ condition is the real challenge, because if current ecological problems arise from a *Gestell* mindset, then solutions that are sought by the same mindset, however ingenious, are likely to provoke unforeseeable further damaging consequences.

The turn to the Julian texts is made on the grounds that the revelatory encounters described therein transform the subjectivity of Julian (as she is found in the text; the thesis makes no claim regarding the historical Julian) and have the potential to transform the reader’s subjectivity in turn. This potential of the Julian texts is discovered through an innovative hermeneutical approach using Ricoeurian foundations with additional interdisciplinary insights and analogies, hence ‘post-Ricoeurian’. The approach describes the act of reading as ‘performative engagement’, involving ‘porosity of encounter’ and ‘niche creation’. A close reading of the Julian texts using this triadic post-Ricoeurian lens is undertaken, seeking to demonstrate that such a reading renders them capable of springing the trap of *Gestell* by restoring the porosity of the reader’s subjectivity. The thesis argues that restoring porosity is Julian’s contribution to the ecological crisis, in addition acknowledging that choosing Julian as a route to freedom generates or regenerates a recognition of the sacred in creation.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis seeks to answer the question: can the Julian of Norwich texts be read today in such a way that they can help address the twenty-first century ecological crisis, by transforming our ‘buffered’ subjectivity into the ‘porous’ subjectivity Julian brought to and learnt from her revelations? The question is predicated upon an argument, with which the thesis begins, that the human destruction of habitat is a symptom of a subjectivity that is *Gestell*, a ‘buffered’ seeing of all of nature and ultimately itself as objective, functional and expendable. For our destructive behaviour towards the planet to change, the subjectivity of humanity has to change and become ‘porous’. The thesis develops a hermeneutical approach to reading the Julian texts which emphasises the porous nature of the interaction of the Julian of the text with her revelations, and the reader’s porous interaction with the text, arguing that porosity is an originary state to which the reader can be restored, rather than a new state as such. The thesis then studies extracts from the Julian texts using the hermeneutical approach it has developed. Through this means it uncovers the text’s power to communicate the immediacy of Julian’s experience, effecting a responsive, subjectivity-changing porosity in her reader. With restored porosity comes the possibility of an attitude of relationality and interdependence with nature, giving hope for the changed behaviour towards it that is needed now. Some observations about the implications of a Julian-effected porosity for our attitude and behaviour towards nature are explored at the close of each of the chapters that study the Julian texts and in the conclusion. Thus, although the argument of the thesis draws upon philosophy and modern inter-disciplinary science, it maintains a theological register throughout which is focussed (and limited) by Julian’s theology.

I begin by describing *Gestell*, as defined by Martin Heidegger, as a mindset that sees everything as an object able to be critiqued, manipulated and controlled by the transcendent subject, and who ends up treating the subject himself in the same way. This diagnosis of *Gestell* subjectivity is supported by Hannah Arendt, who describes humanity as having become *homo faber*, one who makes rather than discovers truth, and who finds himself caught up in a world where everything,

including himself, has become process without end. I also draw upon others who have given a similar account, including Pope Francis who writes of the technological paradigm which has humanity treating the other, nature or person, as an adversarial object with whom one has to enter into a contractual, not a loving or trusting, relationship, and Iain McGilchrist who identifies the objectifying, organising self with the left brain hemisphere. He and Martin Buber, who calls this persona *It* as opposed to *Thou*, see that the less definable right brain or *Thou* is easily eclipsed by the organising left brain or *It*, *homo faber*, *Gestell*, who cannot appreciate the softer, non-adversarial *Thou*. In a historical account on similar lines, Charles Taylor has written of a medieval ‘porous’ self who has been imprisoned by a ‘buffered’ self over the period between the sixteenth and the twenty-first centuries, and suggests that the buffered self finds its supreme expression in Descartes’ *cogito* self.

I then show how the ecological harm that is being done by humanity can be understood as an expression, often with the best of intentions, of *Gestell* subjectivity, looking at each of the spheres of the planet (atmosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere, pedosphere and biosphere) in turn. For example, harm to the pedosphere is caused by farming that sees the land as a means of production, stripping it of its natural ecological richness by forcing a pace and rate of agrarian production its natural state cannot sustain. Harm to the atmosphere takes place by treating it like a gigantic aerial dustbin for greenhouse gases, to the point where it is unable to process them naturally, not least because of a pedosphere denuded of trees. These are examples of humanity forcing nature to operate at our speeded-up pace to meet our ever-growing demand, without noticing what nature needs for its own survival and flourishing. These intrinsic needs are not relevant to the *Gestell* mindset because they are not, in any obvious way, needed by humanity. But *Gestell* is infectious: as it treats nature so it ends up treating other humans, who become valuable only insofar as they are useful to the project of production itself. Everything becomes a means, not an end.

I explore how solutions which are in common currency today arise from a *Gestell* mindset, such as utilitarianly calculated technological solutions; drastically reducing population size; or

creating an artificial world that does not depend on Earth's¹ ecological health. Such solutions, which have an internal logic and force, nevertheless do not work. They resemble earlier solutions to other problems such as feeding a rapidly growing population by invasive and damaging agri-techniques, or ridding an area of pests; solutions whose unforeseen and unintended consequences caused yet more problems. Even attractive solutions that turn to renewable energy sources are flawed if they seek still to reduce the wind or the sun to 'standing reserve', likely to precipitate further unintended harm to nature. The mindset itself, I suggest, with Heidegger, has to change, so that humanity's way of being with and in the world does not have to play catch-up with processes set in motion by *Gestell* perceptions of problems and their solutions, however well-intentioned. The stresses of the planet have reached such a level that we no longer have time for such expensive mistakes.

Having defined the ecological challenge as the need to change human subjectivity by escaping from its enslavement to *Gestell*, I argue, as Heidegger does not, that what is needed is a restored porosity of selfhood. Humanity has to cease its arrogant attitude of control and return to an attitude of service, an intentional porosity that is characterised by humility. Heidegger writes of salvation from *Gestell* by means of a phenomenological process of returning to the Being that exists at the point where the *Gestell* mindset arises. But this Being of beings is an ahistorical and transcendent subject, resembling Descartes' *cogito* self, which by Descartes' own account thinks it is able to arrogate the powers of nature to himself, not a relational and porous self that knows its dependence upon others. Heidegger's solution implies that a transcendent being, having freed itself, is then able to 'choose' a different subjectivity from *Gestell*; as if nature, in this case human nature, were still apparently at its command. Paul Ricoeur, in critiquing phenomenology with hermeneutics, undermines the *cogito* self itself by acknowledging the fallibility of the reader who is summoned and changed by poetic texts in particular. Oliver Davies argues that medieval mystical

¹ Following Flannery (2007), I capitalise Earth to equate it with other planets who enjoy initial capitals: Mars, Venus, etc.

texts like Julian's have the capacity to effect a change in the subjectivity of the reading self through their power to communicate the transformation of the original encounter, which in Julian's case was with her revelations. For Julian, as I will argue, it is the 'intimately communicated', to use Davies' term, porosity she brings to and learns from her revelations that is of particular importance to my argument. My definition of 'porosity' is begun at this point.

Turning to the Julian texts requires, first, that some significant manuscript challenges are addressed. There is no conclusive evidence that links the extant manuscripts, which all post-date Julian, with the fourteenth century Julian of Norwich whom we know existed from independent historical evidence of bequests and a meeting described by her contemporary Margery Kempe. Moreover, the manuscripts have numerous, if minor, disagreements with each other. I clear the ground of these challenges and propose a reading that takes them into account: namely that I will confine my analysis to the text itself and not draw conclusions that depend upon the Julian of the text being identified with the Julian of history. I follow Edmund Colledge and James Walsh in using the 'Paris' manuscript (Bibliothèque Nationale MS Fonds anglais 40), as my base text, tracking alternative readings as I work through the text.

The post-Ricoeurian hermeneutical approach is then developed by taking important principles from Paul Ricoeur and building on them. Ricoeur's argument for the independence of the text from its author, original audience and original setting is the basis upon which I can read the text as I have received it, without having to discern the intentions of its original, unknown author. It frees me to attend to the Julian of the text, who mediates by example and language the remarkable subjectivity-changing experience of her revelations. I adopt Ricoeur's notion of the hermeneut being *in medias res*, in a long line of interpreters, without the last word, and in this role take advice from Ben Quash to bring, intentionally, my own question from my own time to the text, in this case my question of how to escape from the mindset that is harming the planet. I accept Ricoeur's concept of the power of the poetic text to transform the reader's subjectivity and his account of the summoning of the reader to the text.

Ricoeur's insights thus establish the reader as a self summoned to an independent poetic text that will change her. On this stable foundation I build a triadic hermeneutical structure which emphasises the transformative effect of the encounter of the reader with the text, showing how this approach works for the Julian texts. The first part of the structure is the understanding that making sense of a text involves 'performative engagement' with it. To help explain what I mean I draw upon the insights of the enactivists, an interdisciplinary group of scientists and philosophers influenced by phenomenology, who articulate through their research the way in which, in order to make sense, the subject has to enter into relationship with that which she is trying to understand, not just view it from a distance. She has to step forwards and enter the frame, reaching through the text to what lies beyond it, enacting it in real time. This performative engagement offers an adequate account of how Julian responds to her revelations, and also establishes the 'summoned' attitude the reader must embody as he approaches the text. The enactment of performative meaning-making also both requires and brings about porosity of self. 'Porosity of encounter' is the second structure built on Ricoeurian foundations, already implied by Ricoeur's summoned self. Performatively reading a text like Julian's, in which Julian is herself porously and performatively responding to her revelations, both demands porosity from the reader and also brings porosity about. It is this above all that is Julian's gift to our twenty-first century subjectivity: through the communicative power of her language she can spring the trap of *Gestell* enslavement by wounding our *cogito* selves and making us porous again. I define 'porosity' more fully at this point, therefore. The porosity to which Julian can restore us is both ancient: indicated by Taylor in his historical account of the porous medieval self that is prior to the post-Reformation and Enlightenment buffered self; and it is also originary: deep within us, indicated by enactivist neuroscientists Leonard Schilbach and colleagues, who detect a 'dark', pre-linguistic relationality in the human brain.

The third structure of the post-Ricoeurian triad identifies the world that is brought to the text by the subjectivity of the self, and also the world that is created by his changed subjectivity; these I call 'niches' in recognition of their significance as homes, habitats, and the promise that if a

changed subjectivity will lead to a different world than our restored porous subjectivity will make possible a world in which we can live interdependently and relationally in alignment with nature and the planet, not adversarially and harmfully.

The foregoing preparatory work completed, I bring the post-Ricoeurian, triadic hermeneutical approach to the Julian texts, seeking to demonstrate their ability to communicate and bring about porosity (thereby further defined in practice) in the reader. I first look at passages that relate to the three wounds for which she asked in her early life: of 'contricion' (contrition), compassion and a longing to God. Under the heading of the wound of 'contricion' I look at Julian's own subjectivity and the way in which she refuses any label for herself. Insisting that the revelations she receives are not for her alone but for all, she calls on the reader to attend not to her but to the revelations. Her subjectivity is thus established as porous from the start; but she is not invisible: it is *her* way of porously and performatively interacting with her revelations that is such a powerful example for the reader. I look at Julian's loyalty to 'holy chyrch', the one fixed aspect of her subjectivity that she does not surrender, and show how her determined retention of its teaching alongside incompatible revelations brings about a porosity of holy church itself without any intention of heresy or reformation. I also study Julian's sustained porous attitude of 'reuerente drede' which ensures a continuous openness to the subjectivity-changing surprises and paradoxes of the revelations. Under the heading of the wound of 'compassion' I look again at Julian's porous subjectivity, this time in relation to the people in her sickroom who play critical roles in the unfolding of her revelations, and who become representative of all Julian's 'evyn cristen' (fellow Christians). I look at Julian's identity with her 'evyn cristen' and show how even this category is porous so that it becomes difficult to confine it to just one group of people: ultimately Julian is identified as everyman. The niche of her revelations itself is also porous as it expands to include all creation, heaven and hell. Under the heading of her wound of 'longing to God' I study the recurring use of vocabulary related to 'seeing' and 'looking' as the porous means to understanding. I also study Julian's transformative account of prayer as 'beseeching' and 'beseking'. From these studies

I draw some concluding indications of how, freed by Julian from *Gestell* and restored to porosity, our subjectivity might then express a new ‘wounded’ ecological consciousness.

Next, I study the eighth revelation narratively, highlighting the profound porosity of Julian to Christ in her encounter with him at the time of his Passion. The encounter is so close that Julian herself suffers the pains of the Passion, which go beyond anything she could have imagined or that she had experienced before. Her porous and performative encounter with pain means that as she understands that the pain is born of love, so love infuses the niche of the Passion revelation, and these two, in turn, are transformed by, but do not disappear into, the joy of the Resurrection, which Julian also experiences as taking place on the Cross itself, of the same bloody, tortured body of Christ. At the end of this study I draw out some observations of an ecological consciousness emerging from the porosity Julian embodied in her identification with the Passion: one that will identify with the suffering of the Earth and give birth to greater love and service, not defensive fear.

Finally, I look at the fourteenth revelation, a metaphorical account of the fall of Adam and its identity with the Incarnation as Christ ‘falls’ into Mary’s womb. The revelation enacts this identity through the character of a servant, who as both Adam and Christ shows none of the expected aspects of fallen man: he is not disobedient, he is not proud, and he never stops loving his lord who brings about his fall by sending him on a mission he is only too eager to fulfil. The pain and loss of the fall is due to the literal falling of the servant, as he runs in his eagerness to do the will of the lord, which leaves his body sore and bruised and his head turned in such a way that he cannot see the lord anymore, and in particular cannot see that the lord continues to hold a steadfast loving gaze upon him. This paradoxical account is so ‘marvellous’ to Julian that she returns to it again and again over many years, her method being to look ever more closely at the detail of the revelation. It is her performative interaction with the detail that draws her, and her reader, porously into the story as a means to awaken to the meaning of that which seems to make no sense. The detail is inspected and re-inspected until she and her reader experience transformed understanding and hence subjectivity: if we as Adam or everyman are being enacted by the character of the servant

then we are also enclosed in Christ's porous subjectivity, and we are thereby included in the Trinity's porous subjectivity. Ecological consciousness that emerges from the porosity of the fourteenth revelation sees the gifts of the Earth as the face of Christ expressing God's love; the tilling and keeping of the Earth as a porous participation in the salvific work of the Incarnation; and the desecration of the Earth as a denial of the Incarnation.

I conclude that the Julian texts are indeed capable of helping the twenty-first century challenge of the ecological crisis by addressing its cause: that of a *Gestell* mindset only capable of seeing the other as utilitarian standing reserve. Julian can release her reader from captivity to *Gestell* by restoring her porosity. Such porosity brings about a new world or niche in which the Earth is no longer an object to be used but a performative participant with intrinsic value, porous interaction with which brings about learning from it, tuning into it, and living non-harmfully within it. My conclusion acknowledges that choosing the Julian texts as a route to freedom from enslavement engenders a recognition of the sacred in creation.

CHAPTER ONE

Defining the Ecological Challenge as our Buffered, *Gestell* Subjectivity

Introduction

This chapter will argue that in order to help address the damage that is being done to the planet, humanity has first to address its own ‘damaged’ subjectivity. That is to say, our behaviour will change to avoid harm to the planet when our subjectivity changes, and not otherwise. It is our subjectivity that makes us see the world as something to be exploited; it follows that if our subjectivity were to change we would no longer see the world in this way, and this would help us face the ecological crisis. I will use Martin Heidegger’s account of human subjectivity’s enslavement to a perspective he calls *Gestell*, ‘enframed’, the ‘essence of technology’, as the basis for this view. Heidegger’s arguments are not unproblematic. I will conclude, however, that his diagnosis, which is resonant with that of a number of other philosophers and theologians, is correct: humanity is entrapped by a technological mindset that not only brings about behaviour that harms the planet, but also prevents the possibility of seeing other perspectives out of which different behaviour might emerge. Supported by this conclusion I explore examples of how *Gestell* subjectivity harms the planet, and of current, unsatisfactory *Gestell* solutions to the harm. The section ends in agreement with Heidegger’s diagnosis of the need to be saved from *Gestell*, but not with his prescription for salvation, which leaves the transcendent subject or ‘Being’ intact. It argues instead for a hermeneutical approach which draws and builds upon Paul Ricoeur’s insight that poetic texts have the power to summon and change the (only apparently) transcendent self. The Julian of Norwich texts are, I suggest, such poetic texts and with the help of a post-Ricoeurian reading can effect the transformation of the self itself that is needed. The ‘buffered’ *Gestell* subject has to become ‘porous’, and a text like Julian’s can bring this about.

I will explore these themes under the following headings: i) Heidegger’s definition of *Gestell*, the essence of technology, and humanity’s enslavement to that perspective; ii) the way in which a *Gestell* perspective turns everything, including humanity, into ‘standing reserve’, such that

that is all we can see; iii) the harmful behaviours that emerge from a *Gestell* subjectivity in all the planet's 'spheres' of the atmosphere, the hydrosphere, the lithosphere, the pedosphere and the biosphere; iv) the failure of current approaches to the ecological crisis because they too arise from a *Gestell* subjectivity and only address the symptoms, rather than the cause, of ecological damage; v) salvation from *Gestell* subjectivity as the only viable way to address the ecological challenge, not, as Heidegger suggests, through a phenomenological route that leaves the transcendent subject unassailed, but through reading a text like Julian's with a post-Ricoeurian hermeneutics that recognises, foregrounds and restores the porosity of the subject.

i) Enslaved to Heidegger's Gestell subjectivity

Martin Heidegger argues that humanity is threatened not by technology itself, but by its 'essence', which makes us see both the world and ourselves as 'enframed'. 'Enframing', the term for which is *Gestell*, brings about a way of thinking that renders everything, including humanity, as utilitarian 'standing reserve', affecting the way people behave towards each other and towards the planet. There is no escape from *Gestell* subjectivity, argues Heidegger, unless we can return to the place from which it springs and see that there are other ways of being and thinking.

Heidegger explores *Gestell* in his essay 'The Question Concerning Technology' (Heidegger 1949/1977), which is part two of a four-part lecture series he delivered in Bremen in 1949 (Heidegger 1949/2012).² The essay proposes that the danger of technology is not the lethal weaponry it can produce but the way it makes man³ look at the world and himself. This is *Gestell*, or 'the essence of technology'. In the Lovitt translation of Heidegger's lecture that I am using *Gestell* is termed 'enframed'. A more recent translation by Andrew Mitchell and François Raffoul calls it 'positionality' (1949/2012). As Mark Blitz observes, neither term quite does justice to the

² Heidegger famously and notoriously was seen as an intellectual leader within Nazism (eg Blitz 2014 p 66). This is Heidegger's first public address after the Second World War, raising the question of whether the lectures represent an attempt to understand how he came to hold in himself such morally outrageous views.

³ Here and elsewhere if the writer has used the masculine form I retain it. I use the feminine form extensively myself.

concept (Blitz 2014 p 73) and I retain the word *Gestell* for my argument. *Gestell* subjectivity determines not just a framework for seeing but also an inner core: a bookcase and also a skeleton. Heidegger says that, like a mountain chain that unfolds the mountains into mountain ranges, *Gestell* is a 'disposition' that unfolds the way we have feelings (Heidegger 1949/1977 p 9). It thus has an all enveloping effect, both as a concept that determines selfhood, and also as a way of seeing and making sense of the world. We are prone, mistakenly, to look at technology as the cause of our problems, or the solution to our problems, or as a neutral force, to be used by us for good or for ill. All these perspectives are wrong, argues Heidegger, because they flow from the technological way of thinking that sits behind the technology that we see, which has turned all of nature and ultimately ourselves into things to be used. The 'things to be used' are in 'standing reserve', so everything is either being used or waiting to be used. Thus *Gestell* is to be understood as the 'enframing that sets everything in standing reserve'. Nothing and no one is there for it- or himself, in its own intrinsic value and existence. Like the interchangeable parts of a machine, nature and humanity have become interchangeable parts to be used or discarded in the same way. We see nature as enframed; but we ourselves are also enframed.

Heidegger regards *Gestell* as beginning its 'reign' when modern natural science was born. But it was not brought to birth by modern science, he says, rather it was *Gestell* that determined the birth.⁴ Thus the *Gestell* perspective was in place before the eighteenth century when natural science became a recognised discipline and modern technology began significantly to change the landscape (Blitz 2014 p 74). *Gestell* subjectivity was what challenged nature to unlock its forces, and changed our behaviour towards it and ourselves as a result. Nature became something to control, count, store and use as a result of *Gestell* subjectivity. Before he became enslaved to a *Gestell* perspective, man's relationship to nature was benign, respectful, even reverent. Nature was left to its own

⁴ The question might be reasonably asked, What then did give rise to the *Gestell* perspective? Heidegger does not answer but others seek to, as the following paragraphs will explore. They do not agree with each other, and I do not close with the answer, which would require a more thorough historical survey than this thesis allows. I do accept, as all the writers do, that whatever its cause, there *was* a shift in perspective, and that to be free from *Gestell* subjectivity is in some way to experience a restoration of perspective, hence 'restoring porosity' of the thesis title.

determination, while man worked with it using his simple agricultural tools of the horse drawn plough and the hammer (Blitz 2014 p 71). A windmill represents this earlier approach to nature, while a hydroelectric dam which turns the Rhine into standing reserve is the result of *Gestell* thinking (Heidegger 1949/1977 p 7). The difference between the two approaches to energy is that the former works only when the wind blows, and leaves the wind unaffected. The latter creates an artificial force in the water that is constant, not contingent upon the natural flow of the river, allowing energy to be gathered without a break and to be stored; and the river is affected so that those downstream have a denuded flow and supply of water. The river has become something that serves (some) men's ends.

There was no golden age of humanity living in harmony with nature, argues environmental historian J.R. McNeill (2000). Humans have always used the things of the Earth for their own ends. We are vulnerable to our environment: we do not have fur to keep us warm; a shell to protect us; developed senses of smell or sight or hearing to alert us to danger; speed to flee from that danger; or the strength to fight it. We had to use our brains to find ways of sheltering ourselves, of putting ourselves at the top of the food chain, and of staying there. This developed into a highly sophisticated ability to make the environment adapt to our needs, rather than adapt ourselves to the environment, and under this regimen, not least because forming communities and working with each other was essential to its success, humanity flourished.⁵

Our relationship has always been adversarial and always, according to evolutionary biologist E.O. Wilson, detrimental to nature (2001 p 241). In serving our own needs, humans have never

⁵ Our brains expanded measurably as tool creation and use involved intense social engagement (Fuentes 2015 p 307).

attended to the ecological preservation of a planet that seemed to go on forever.⁶ E.O. Wilson's views are not without their detractors, as he himself admits (Wilson 2001 pp 235ff), and there are plenty of examples of human communities that do seem to have managed to live in harmony with their environment for thousands of years. But it is also notable that their way of life is not sought after by the majority of humanity, and has itself been severely disrupted by the onslaught of industrialisation, not least because some indigenous peoples themselves succumb to the desire for the benefits industrialised societies seem to confer.⁷

Industrialisation, which Heidegger would say was caused by the *Gestell* perspective, and both E.O. Wilson and J.R. McNeill would say was a continuation of the same destructive urge to survive, just a more powerful one, nevertheless brought about a distinct change in humanity's relationship with nature. In 1712, Thomas Newcomen invented and built the first steam engine that could pump water continuously from a coal mine at Dudley Castle in Staffordshire, and this, as James Lovelock puts it, heralded the 'Anthropocene era', the era of human domination (Lovelock 2014 p 4). From that time humanity's power to use and adapt nature to serve its own ends increased exponentially, and harm to the planet increased exponentially as well. From then on humanity could, as it seemed, exercise control over nature, command it and store its power so that it was always available for human use. Humans felt they were no longer subject to the exigencies of nature.

In Wilson's and McNeill's views, technology exists, and always has done, to serve human ends. If we now find that through technology we are harming the planet, we think that we simply need to use it differently to heal the planet. Technological solutions should deal with the ecological

⁶ 'As the human wave rolled over the last of the virgin lands like a smothering blanket, Paleo-Indians throughout America, Polynesians across the Pacific, Indonesians into Madagascar, Dutch sailors ashore on Mauritius (to meet and extirpate the dodo), they were constrained by neither knowledge of endemicity nor any ethic of conservation. For them the world must have seemed to stretch forever beyond the horizon. If fruit pigeons and giant tortoises disappear from this island, they will surely be found on the next one. What counts is food today, a healthy family, and tribute for the chief, victory celebrations, rites of passage, feasts. As the Mexican truck driver said who shot one of the last two imperial woodpeckers, largest of all the world's woodpeckers, "It was a great piece of meat"' (Wilson 2001 p 241).

⁷ Drawn to my attention by sociologist Professor Margot Jefferys in private discussions in the 1990s.

crisis and that is what our minds should bend towards, now that we know how much damage we have done. Ecologist and explorer Tim Flannery has suggested that this is a possible direction of travel (Flannery 2015 pp 151ff), citing a number of excellent examples of technology turned towards saving, not destroying, the planet, but he is not so hubristic as to think that humanity will save the planet by its technological brilliance alone (2015 eg pp 187, 213). Heidegger would say that in fact *Gestell* subjectivity is using humans as much as it is using technology, and the appearance that technology is serving humanity is only that: an appearance, so we should be wary of 'solutions' that arise from the same subjectivity.

ii) *The perspective that turns everything into 'standing reserve'*

The *Gestell* perspective 'sets upon nature, challenging it to yield what man requires' (Heidegger 1949/1977 p 6). It makes nature look as though it is at our command. So, for example, we build a hydro electric dam on the Rhine, turning the river from a work of natural art into power. Nature becomes merely potential, on standby, not of intrinsic value but something that is waiting to be used, in 'standing reserve' (p 7). But man too finds himself caught up in this way of seeing: as soon as nature is of concern only as standing reserve, quantifiable and available for use, man himself is nothing but the 'orderer of the standing reserve' (p 14). He too becomes merely something available for use. He drives technology forward, but he does not do so freely: he does it because he, like nature, is challenged to. From this *Gestell* way of seeing, man encounters only the world he has created, which is a world in which everything, including himself, is for use.

If everything becomes available for use, then everything is calculable. 'Correct' determining can follow from this way of seeing, but the correct is not necessarily the true. For example, a utilitarian calculation that works out the maximum productivity of a herd of cows may be a correct calculation, but the cows *qua* cows have become hidden behind their function as repositories of milk or meat. The truth 'withdraw[s]' (p 13). Two kinds of danger emerge from this: first, as soon as nature concerns man only inasmuch as it is available for use ('standing reserve') and man himself

is nothing but the ‘orderer of the standing reserve’ (p 14), encountering everything as his own construct, as he himself becomes no more than standing reserve, he all the while nevertheless *feels* as though he is lord of the universe, such as the hubristic commander of technology that will turn the Rhine into a constant supply of energy.⁸ Second, it appears as though man everywhere only encounters himself because he makes his own world using technology. In fact he never encounters himself, his essence, because he is in attendance on the perception of everything being for use, not perceiving that that is happening. This perception banishes man into ‘revealing as ordering’: what emerges does so only to be used. This conceals other kinds of revealing, in particular revealing of what Heidegger calls ‘presences’, the true being of things. So the way of seeing and ordering and objectifying that is *Gestell*, the essence of technology, prevents revealing itself, that whereby truth comes to pass. ‘Enframing blocks the shining-forth and holding-sway of truth’ (p 14). Heidegger argues that science, by detaching itself from our everyday experience, thus restricts our perspective, because it closes off pathways to depth that our ordinary use of things opens up. Science takes itself away from experience, which might have taught a different way of seeing, into a controlled environment (Blitz 2014 p 68).

Other philosophers and theologians concur with Heidegger’s diagnosis of a false world created by *Gestell*. His former student Hannah Arendt argues that, with the science of Galileo, *homo faber* emerged: man who ‘makes’ truth. From the time of Galileo, scientists discovered the truth by doing, not by thinking, and depended upon technology, not on philosophy (Arendt 1958/1998 pp 293ff). We turned ourselves and our actions into mere utility when history became ‘making things’ and, grammatically, ‘for the sake of’ and ‘in order to’ lost their distinction (Arendt

⁸ Or the Nile: J.R. McNeill writes that in 1908, Churchill stood before Lake Victoria, watching the waters of the world’s second largest lake flow over Owen Falls into the world’s longest river, the Nile. He later recorded his thoughts: ‘So much power running to waste [...] such a lever to control the natural forces of Africa ungripped, cannot but vex and stimulate the imagination. And what fun to make the immemorial Nile begin its journey by diving into a turbine’ (McNeill 2000 p 149).

1954/2006 p 78).⁹ Arendt sees that *homo faber*, the one who makes or fabricates, does not survive the process of fabrication. Although he has found undreamed of ways of producing things and measuring the infinitely small and the infinitely large, like the *Gestell* subject he sees himself as merely part of the processes of nature and history. The technological way of seeing, presenting a false world, then blinds us to any other way of seeing. *Homo faber* may believe he is in charge, but he has no other purpose than process itself, becoming indistinguishable from *animal laborans* (Arendt 1958/1998 pp 85f),¹⁰ a ‘drudge condemned to routine’ (Sennett 2008 p 6) and descends into ‘redoubled activity or despair’ (Arendt 1958/1998 p 293).¹¹ We have become ‘one dimensional’ as Paul Ricoeur puts it, serving an industrial system that is given over to ‘growth without limit or end beyond itself’ (Ricoeur 1995 p 65). Arne Naess writes of the developer’s mindset who sees a forest not as an entity with a heart and its own intrinsic value, but only as potential economic gain (Naess 2016 p 77). J.R. McNeill argues that it is the idea of economic growth that has now enslaved humanity, and this is what had brought about the exponential acceleration of technological power and damage to the Earth in the twentieth century (McNeill 2000 p 355).

Martin Buber writes of the individual who becomes *It* not *Thou* as having no ‘[g]enuine subjectivity’ (Buber 1923/2013 p 44). He echoes Heidegger’s account of enframing: in the fierce blaze of technology, ‘*Thou* cannot resist the electric light of *It*’ (p 45). And Iain McGilchrist (2009) after conducting a meta-analysis of research into left and right brain hemisphere perception, offers a historical account of humanity coming under the sway of the left hemisphere that coheres with

⁹ ‘The danger of transforming the unknown and unknowable ‘higher aims’ into planned and willed intentions was that meaning and meaningfulness were transformed into ends — which is what happened when Marx took the Hegelian meaning of all history — the progressive unfolding and actualisation of the idea of Freedom — to be an end of human action, and when he furthermore, in accordance with tradition, viewed this ultimate ‘end’ as the end product of a manufacturing process. But neither freedom nor any other meaning can ever be the product of a human activity in the sense in which the table is clearly the end-product of the carpenter’s activity [...] The growing meaninglessness of the modern world is perhaps nowhere more clearly foreshadowed than in this identification of meaning and end’ (Arendt 1954/2006 p 78).

¹⁰ ‘[O]nly the distinction between productive and unproductive labor [...] matter[s]’ (Arendt 1958/1998 p 85).

¹¹ Richard Sennett critiques Arendt’s account of *animal laborans* to raise his or her status to that of the craftsman who discovers creativity in the very act of making (Sennett 2008). This is a redemptive route out of ‘despair’ and I return to it briefly in my conclusion.

Buber, Heidegger and Arendt. The left brain, which is organised, mathematical, rigorous and binary, suits our technological age. If it is in charge, it will not listen to the right brain which is open to the unknown, poetic, simple, chaotic and empathetic. The left brain will silence and outflank its gentler other half, creating its own version of external reality through technology.¹²

Paul Ricoeur writes of a ‘desacralised’ modern world, in which nature ‘is no longer a store of signs’. The universe is objectified as science becomes not just a form of knowledge but a way of looking (Ricoeur 1995 p 61). The utilitarian world is one which signifies nothing other than use, and is thus a world without divinity. Olivier Clément (2000) describes ‘the technical universe’ as having the power to ‘weaken the heart-spirit’ and thus change what we see (p 122).¹³ Charles Taylor (2007) argues that a shift from a ‘porous’ to a ‘buffered’ self came about between 1500 and 2000. The character of Taylor’s buffered self emerges as the Reformation, reacting to corruption within the Church, ‘flattened’ all orders of holiness: priests and religious were no longer the guardians of the sacred, and all people had to be equally holy (Taylor 2007 p 80). The post-Reformation mindset, which should have resulted in a world where God was not only in some special holy places but everywhere, in fact made it possible for God to be ‘lopped off’ altogether (p 86), and the age of secularism commenced, with only ourselves and the structures we might create anew on rational principles to rely upon. Out of this, argues Taylor, came a move to human-imposed discipline, within a person and within a society. The sacred was expelled, and things that

¹² The right brain cannot withstand the dominance of the left. To illustrate his argument (and to provide the title for his book) McGilchrist recounts the Nietzschean story of the master who was benevolent, wise and nonviolent, who ruled a realm that grew and flourished so much that he had to appoint emissaries; these he sent out, knowing that he had to let them rule in his name and not be closely overseen by him. One of the emissaries took the master’s benevolent non-intervention as weakness, became contemptuous of his master, usurped him, duped the people, became a tyrant and the dominion collapsed in ruins (McGilchrist 2009 p 24). In the analogy the master is the right brain hemisphere and the emissary is the left brain hemisphere: the point being that the left should serve the right which is open to the unknown, to beauty, to the value of incommensurable things, just as, for Buber, *It* should serve *Thou*, but does not.

¹³ ‘If we are not careful, the technical universe, left to its own devices, will damage human nature in its very depths. The abnormal growth of purely cerebral calculation; the sensual refusal, in our leisure time, to do any real thinking; the increasing difficulty, while working, of ‘thinking with one’s hands’; the coldness of metal, the abstractness of synthetic materials, the constant noise, the invasion of images that appeal to our sniggering instincts; all conduce to a weakening of the unifying powers of the ‘heart-spirit’. Today these powers must be renewed, if humanity and its cosmic environment are not to be destroyed’ (Clément 2000 p 122).

might have been magical became instrumental to building order: enchantment was driven out. ‘In consequence the subject as porous fades more and more away’ (p 85). The buffered self, says Taylor, finds its ‘complete definition’ in René Descartes.¹⁴ With his ideas come the closing off of intimacy and connectedness to each other (Taylor 2007 p 133).

Other theologians recognise the subsumption of the human into the utilitarian. For example, Paul Janz (2009) argues that the use of ‘cognitive reasoning’ to explain natural occurrences subsumes humanity in its contingent dependence, as humans become both receptors and initiators of processes and changes in the world.¹⁵ Pope Francis sees humanity falling prey to the ‘technological paradigm’ as ‘rapidification’ has speeded up human activity to a pace far faster than nature (Francis 2015 p 15), in the process turning all the elements of creation, including ourselves, into commodities (p 23). Technology becomes the key to the meaning of existence and ‘our lives surrender to its conditioning’ (p 83).

These scholars give different accounts of how the ‘buffering’ of the human self happened and use different language to describe it, but they are all notably similar in their diagnosis that at some point before the industrial revolution humanity took on a controlling, adversarial subjectivity in relation to nature and itself, and is now enslaved by it.

iii) How Gestell subjectivity brings about ecological damage

The damaging effect of *Gestell* subjectivity comes about through the way it makes humanity perceive and thus behave towards nature. We see everything as ‘standing reserve’, and the machines we invent are intended to ever increase and improve our use of nature. Heidegger argues that modern machines are not newer versions of old machines such as spinning wheels or water

¹⁴ Descartes’ *cogito* self, ‘knowing the force and action of fire, water, air, the stars, heavens and all other bodies that environ us [...] can in the same way *employ them* in all those uses to which they are adapted, and thus render ourselves the *masters and possessors of nature*’ (Descartes 1637/1970 p 119, my italics).

¹⁵ ‘[O]nce the natural causal processes occurring dynamically in the world have been denied any independent reality and authority apart from what is conferred upon them by cognitive reasoning, it is then inevitable that questions of human causal agency in the world [...] should also become so subsumed’ (Janz 2009 p 80).

mills, which work and flow at the pace of nature. Modern machines are in an altogether different category, created by *Gestell* thinking, in which nature is turned into standing reserve, something that is for use. The energy in nature is unlocked and transformed, stored, distributed and switched about (Heidegger 1949/1977 p 7). *Gestell* subjectivity ‘puts to nature the unreasonable demand that it supply energy that can be extracted and stored as such’ (p 6). This is different from windmills whose sails are entirely dependent upon the wind blowing, or watermills which are turned by the river’s flow. Windmills do not unlock energy and store it, whereas *Gestell* thinking ‘sets upon’ nature, challenging it to yield what man requires (p 6), so man, enslaved to this way of thinking, creates a hydroelectric plant on the Rhine which turns the river itself into standing reserve (p 7). But it is *Gestell* thinking which ‘uses’ man to treat nature in this way. If man has brought about this exploiting of nature because he is challenged to by his *Gestell* subjectivity, then he too is being used as ‘standing reserve’. Heidegger gives an example of the forester who is ‘challenged’ to meet the requirements of the lumber yard. Like the rest of the operation, he becomes an interchangeable piece of machinery: he is ‘subordinate to the orderability of cellulose, which is challenged forth by the need for paper, which in turn is challenged to become newspapers which tell everyone what to think’ (p 8). The use to which man is put by his *Gestell* perspective is to drive technology forward (p 8). When he ‘ensnares nature’ he has already been claimed by *Gestell* subjectivity as he is challenged to approach nature as an object of research (p 9).

Mark Blitz is appalled to see Heidegger use the *Gestell* perspective to explain how it is that agriculture becomes the same as corpses in gas chambers, blockading and starving countries and the production of hydrogen bombs (Blitz 2014 p 70). Blitz is clear that there is a moral difference between these activities, and that we can choose between them, regardless of the dominance of the *Gestell* perspective. I wonder, however, if Heidegger is not trying to understand how it was that he himself could have supported Nazism. *Gestell* thinking treats *everything* as standing reserve. Modern technological approaches to agriculture turn the animals, the land and its produce into things that can be used. Once they have lost their intrinsic value, they no longer need be treated

with respect or reverence. If man too is caught in standing reserve in the same way by his *Gestell* subjectivity, then man too can be treated as a thing without respect or reverence, and any action towards him becomes possible if it can be utilitarianly justified.¹⁶

The *Gestell* perspective dehumanises us and makes us slaves to process. J.R. McNeill gives an account of the damage by working through each of the spheres of the planet: the atmosphere, the hydrosphere, the lithosphere, the pedosphere and the biosphere. I describe humanity's effects on each of these spheres to demonstrate the bondage of *Gestell* thinking: with good intentions great harm is done. McNeill's approach avoids the danger of partial accounting, identified by James Lovelock (1988), whereby only that stress on the planet is seen which accords with the scientific discipline of the investigation. Using the human body as an analogy for the planet, Lovelock argues for taking the approach of the general practitioner, who will see in general the state of a person's body, rather than that of a specialist who will only attend to the kidneys or the heart or the bones, etc., depending upon her speciality and therefore what she is looking for (Lovelock 1988 p xvii).¹⁷ The five spheres of a) atmosphere; b) hydrosphere; c) lithosphere; d) pedosphere; and e) biosphere identified by McNeill (2000) are categories that demonstrate rather than undermine the interconnectedness of every part of the planet and therefore help to evoke a comprehensive view of what amounts to a wholesale destruction of habitat, of Earth as 'home'.

a) The atmosphere

The atmosphere is the thin gaseous envelope that surrounds the Earth. Scientist and explorer Tim Flannery, similarly attending holistically to the state of the planet, calls it our 'great aerial ocean' (Flannery 2007 p 19). It is about 100 kilometres thick, although the outer boundary is

¹⁶ Richard Sennett understands, without sympathising with the 'obscene' comparison, the force of Heidegger's argument here (Sennett 2008 p 3).

¹⁷ This is the basis for Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis, which attracted ire from both scientists and theologians who thought he was turning the planet into a god. At the suggestion of his friend, the novelist William Golding, he adopted the Earth Goddess Gaia as the name for his holistic approach to the challenges of the planet in order to make his readers see them as parts of a whole and the planet itself as a single living organism, like a human body (Lovelock 2001 p 3).

arbitrary as it shades off gradually into outer space. Air contains thousands of gases, but two predominate: nitrogen (78%) and oxygen (21%). In the long term the chemistry of the atmosphere has changed, for example in the very early days of Earth many low-density gases were lost to outer space, and before there were plants on Earth there was not much oxygen. Now there are many cycles of motion of gases, created by changes of temperature in the outer regions of the atmosphere known as the stratosphere, and at the lowest altitudes by exchanges of heat, moisture and gases with soil, water and living things. The outermost regions of the atmosphere receive and reflect the all-important sun's rays. The gases in the atmosphere maintain a balance between them to make life possible, supported by the reception of the sun's rays on the outer edge and by photosynthesis and other activities of the Earth's surface on the inner edge. If such a balance were not maintained, Earth could be more like Mars, whose average temperature is minus 23° C, or it could resemble Venus, where temperatures are above the boiling point of water. Lovelock sees the state of Venus as Earth's destiny if the plant life that creates breathable air were to be extinguished (Lovelock 2014 p 158). Not much needs to be done to the gases to alter conditions on Earth fundamentally; as Flannery points out, gases such as carbon dioxide and methane are trace gases, so that only tiny changes in their concentration trigger vast changes in the atmosphere (Flannery 2007 p 42).

The acceleration of carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere from 1800 onwards, together with other greenhouse gases following industrialisation, meant that heat from the sun was more effectively trapped. This was not understood. Soot and dust injected into what seemed like infinite space slightly lowered the amount of solar energy reaching the Earth's surface and meant that the increase in the warmth of the Earth, that we now know is due to greenhouse gases, was reduced. But the Earth is warming more quickly now. The latest Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change Assessment Report states: 'each of the last three decades has been successively warmer at the Earth's surface than any preceding decade since 1850. The period from 1983 to 2012 was *likely*¹⁸ the warmest 30-year period of the last 1400 years in the Northern Hemisphere' (IPCC

¹⁸ 'Likely' in IPCC reports means 66% - 100% likely.

2014 p 2, author's italics). Lovelock became convinced that the Earth was shooting up into a hot, steady state which it would reach by about 2050, at which point most of the planet would be uninhabitable by humans (Lovelock 2006 pp 54, 65). More recently he has lengthened his predictions, though not the seriousness of his warning (2014 p 142). The heating of the atmosphere and the consequent dramatic shifts in weather patterns mean that species, including humans, are forced to abandon their habitats and seek new homes elsewhere, when 'elsewhere' is inexorably dwindling in size. But even as attempts are made to reduce carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions, the causes of those emissions, fossil fuels, are still being prospected for. And more attractive solutions that use renewable sources of energy, approached with the *Gestell* mindset that seeks still to harness nature on industrial scales, in such a way that humanity has the energy it needs as much and reliably as we have come to depend upon in the industrialised world, threaten other, unforeseen consequences. Sir Chris Llewelyn Smith of the Oxford Energy Network points out that a sunny area the size of the British Isles covered with solar panels would be enough to meet all the world's energy needs (Highfield 2017 p 39), but the impracticality of such a solution is not the only reason why it would fail. Thousands of miles of fields covered by solar panels may harness quantities of sunlight but they themselves and the infrastructure they demand in order to store and transport the energy will inflict other kinds of damage on wildlife habitats. And they are not beautiful. Sara Maitland, who spent a long time searching for and then finding a wild enough landscape for her home, was devastated with grief as wind turbines were built there on an industrial scale, invading not just the landscape but also the soundscape of her beloved Galloway (Maitland 2012).¹⁹

b) The hydrosphere

There is so much water in the Earth – 1.4 billion cubic kilometres – that some call it the 'blue planet'. More than 97% of Earth's water is in the oceans. Every year, the sun gathers up about half

¹⁹ The essay is a moving description of her attempts to find the turbines beautiful. She believes they are just, given the threat of climate change particularly to the poorest communities in the world.

a million cubic kilometres, which falls back on to the Earth as rain and snow. This is the source of all the world's stock of fresh water. Over two-thirds of it is currently frozen in ice caps and glaciers, almost all in Antarctica. Nearly all of that which is left is underground at currently inaccessible depths. Only about one-quarter of one percent of the world's fresh water (approximately 90,000 cubic kilometres) is in lakes and rivers where it is accessible. Of this, about a quarter is in Lake Baikal in Siberia. Water is also found in the atmosphere, in permafrost (sub-soil which remains freezing throughout the year), and in living organisms (McNeill 2000 p 119). People need water as surely as they need oxygen. For a very long time, humans only needed water to drink. But in the last few thousand years people have also relied upon water to irrigate their crops, carry their wastes, wash their bodies and their possessions, and much more recently to power their mills and machines. Humans used cheap labour and then modern technology to move and control water on vast scales. The twentieth century saw an immense increase in the use, waste and pollution of water supplies, and in the replumbing of the planet through dams, influencing water courses on a massive scale and affecting life downstream (McNeill 2000 pp 120ff). Additionally, warming and eutrophication²⁰ of the oceans means that what were methane sinks and home to underwater biodiversity are set not only to become uninhabitable but also to emit the greenhouse gas methane on an unimaginably vast scale (IPCC 2014 p 4), forcing global temperatures to rise even more. Without intending harm, but with an approach to policy-making out of a *Gestell* subjectivity that can only think in utilitarian terms, the Earth's hydrosphere has been damaged perhaps beyond repair. The treatment of Lake Victoria during the twentieth century is cited by the UN Environmental Panel as an example of solutions imposed with the best of intentions that only

²⁰ An excessive amount of nutrients in the water giving rise to algae blooms that kill off aquatic biodiversity.

give rise to worse problems: a symptom of the dominance of *Gestell* subjectivity (UNEP 2002 p 305);²¹ the latest UNEP report remains gloomy (2012 p 126).

c) *The lithosphere*

The lithosphere is the outer crust of Earth, some 120 km thick, rock floating on molten rock. The rocks have eroded, deposited on ocean floors as sediment, consolidated into rock again, and been thrust up above sea level again, only a few times in the history of the Earth (McNeill 2000 p 22). By contrast, human impact was miniscule until the industrial age. During the twentieth century humans moved enough soil and rock to rival natural disturbances for the first time. By the 1990s humans were moving 42 billion tons of rock and soil per annum mainly through mining and accelerated soil cultivation. This is comparable to natural movements such as, for example, the 30 billion tons moved per annum by oceanic volcanoes, or 4.3 billion tons per annum by glacier movement (McNeill 2000 p 30). Mining for fossil fuels destroys habitats, and is further evidence of the dominance of *Gestell* thinking even when it makes no sense: what is the point of seeking to reduce fossil fuel emissions while still mining for them? We are arguing for closing off one end of the pipeline while still pumping oil into the other end, comments George Marshall (2014 p 162).

²¹ Lake Victoria has provided food and livelihoods for those living around it, human and other creatures, for centuries. The fish in the Lake ate algae and snails that host the larvae of Schistosomes that cause bilharzia in humans. With the introduction of gill nets by European settlers at the beginning of the twentieth century, indigenous fish species began to decline. With no algae-eating fish, the lake started to eutrophicate and the people were exposed to more disease. Other fish species were introduced to boost stocks, but they were non-native, and harmed the indigenous fish still further. Nile perch were introduced in the 1960s for commercial fisheries, and the local people suffered as their livelihoods were threatened. They began to experience malnutrition, having previously gained all their food needs from the Lake. Wetlands around the Lake were converted to grow cotton, rice and sugarcane and their role as filters for silt and nutrients was lost, so that run-off went straight into the Lake, increasing eutrophication. The cloudy waters became ideal for Nile perch and deathly for indigenous species who preferred clear waters. Sewage in particular encouraged the growth of water hyacinth, originally introduced for aesthetic reasons. The water hyacinth is one of the world's most invasive plants. Its spread on the Lake hampered small fishing boats. The dense cover in turn encouraged weed growth, an ideal habitat for snails and mosquitoes, increasing the threat of bilharzia and malaria (UNEP 2002 p 305). The process of destroying the life of the Lake was immensely exacerbated when it became a closed water system. Churchill's dream of making the Nile serve humanity was finally realised in 1946, when construction began on the Owen Falls Dam. In 1954, the Nile waters at last dived into turbines. Uganda and eastern Kenya got 150,000 kilowatts of electrical capacity, but Lake Victoria became a reservoir (McNeill 2000 p 149).

d) The pedosphere

The pedosphere is the soil that lies on top of the lithosphere like skin on flesh, about half a metre thick, made of sand, clay, silt and organic matter. It acts as a cleansing and protecting membrane between the lithosphere and the atmosphere. Changes to the pedosphere take place continually by means of water and wind. Humans have affected the pedosphere through cultivation of the land as they settled on it. The first wave of human expansion and settlement took place in the Middle East, India and China, when agriculture spread from the river valleys to forest lands, between 2000 BC and 1000 AD. As forests were cut or burned to make way for crops and animals, the erosion of soil resulted, though this stabilised as farms developed (McNeill 2000 pp 35ff). More significant and potentially damaging effects to the pedosphere took place as Europe expanded, beginning with the Americas after 1492, when inappropriate farming methods were applied to new landscapes. Northern European farmers were used to mild rainfall, low slopes and heavy soils resistant to erosion. Their hooved animals and sowing methods desertified the more fragile landscapes of the Americas, South Africa, Australasia and Inner Asia. Moreover, the power of the European conquerors to shunt native populations around meant that marginal lands came under the plough and digging stick (McNeill 2000 pp 39ff). Together with mass deforestation, the cultivation of the topsoil has deprived Earth of the ability to deal with carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, thus multiplying damaging effects. Farming, which brought about settled homes for humans, upscaled for productivity to feed growing populations but also for profit, has unsettled the habitats of other species, destroying the bio-diversity that ensures a healthy soil and ultimately undermining the habitats of humans too. Colin Tudge cites numerous examples of this self-destructive approach (Tudge 2004 pp 185ff).

e) The biosphere

The biosphere is the sum of all the habitats in which species live. It includes every home in every part of the world, from the ‘bubbling seafloor vents teeming with bacteria’ to ‘glaciers at dizzy

heights where the occasional beetle may be found', and everything in between (McNeill 2000 p 192). The biosphere is the home of the biota, which is the name for all living things, including the human species. It is the diversity of species (not individual species) that ensures a balance of life on Earth, and creates and sustains the habitats in which life flourishes, including human life. In a thimbleful of earth can be found algae, fungi, nematodes, mites, springtails, enchytraeid worms and thousands of species of bacteria (Wilson 2001 p 328). This is a tiny fragment of one ecosystem, showing in microcosm the interdependence of species that is replicated throughout the planet. McNeill shows that by the end of the twentieth century, for the richer third of the world, the human species was able to dominate all other species as never before. This was due to its ability to feed itself and treat the diseases that had hitherto been fatal. For species other than human, the chances of survival depended on their ability to live within a human-dominated biosphere. There were those organisms that met human needs and were capable of being domesticated, such as cattle, rice, and eucalyptus, and they fared well. There were those that found niches within the biosphere, such as rats, crab-grass and tuberculosis bacillus, and these, too survived well. Creatures that humans found useful but incapable of domestication, such as blue whales and bison, and those that could not adjust to a human-dominated biosphere, such as gorillas and the smallpox virus, faced extinction. Their survival depended upon whether humans suffered them or not. This human domination is only apparent, however. The changes for which humans have been responsible have for the most part been inadvertent: humans have not intended to wipe out species (apart from some disease-bearing viruses and bacteria), but that is what has happened (McNeill 2000 pp 265f).

The five spheres of the Earth all show considerable and interconnected signs of distress which can be attributed to *Gestell* human interventions that did not intend harm: the atmosphere with its increase in greenhouse gases that makes it act like a blanket thrown over an already warming Earth; the hydrosphere, replumbed and polluted and emitting gases it once stored into the atmosphere; the lithosphere mined and plundered for fossil fuels that also emit greenhouse gases; the pedosphere stripped of its protecting green cover so the Earth cannot cool itself by transforming

carbon dioxide through photosynthesis; and the biosphere so reduced in diversity of species as to threaten all of life. The harm to each sphere contributes to the harm to ‘home’ for each species, including humans. Each sphere seems enormous to the individual human perspective, and yet we have managed to dominate and change them all.

iv) The failure of current approaches to solving the ecological crisis

The implication of the Heideggerian position is that the only way to address the ecological crisis is to be ‘saved’ from *Gestell* subjectivity. Before turning to the question of how this might be achieved, I explore other proposed solutions that do not require a change of mindset, all of which are in common currency today. Under the different headings of the ‘spheres’ above I have briefly considered examples of *Gestell* technological solutions to the stresses on the planet and the hazardous unforeseen consequences that are likely to ensue. I will: a) take this technological approach to its logical conclusion: the creation of an artificial world once the current one has been made uninhabitable by humans, and question its desirability or sustainability; b) question the ability of utilitarian approaches to policy creation, in use today, to solve the crisis; c) question the assumption that humanity has first to look to its own economic health before it can afford to attend to the planet’s health; and finally d) question the proposition that it is a matter of waiting (hoping?) for the really grand disaster that will, like the invasion of Czechoslovakia that precipitated the Second World War, persuade humanity that it must act to prevent climate change and biodiversity loss.

a) An artificial world?

We might think we can create an artificial world when the natural one is no longer able to proffer its services, having exhausted them. The *Gestell* perspective would have us believe this is possible. E.O. Wilson’s humans who thought the Earth was infinite now look, not to rein in their appetites, but to find ways of carrying on as before: ‘technological genius will find a way’ (Wilson 2001 p

332).²² And if the Earth cannot be the base for our technologically invented world, we can always colonise another planet, think our enframed selves.

It is uncontroversial to observe not only that technological enhancements of life have offered huge benefits, for example for those who suffer from physical disabilities, but also that humans are readily able to adapt to them. Andy Clark offers examples of our swift adaptation to, for example, a stick for walking (Clark 2011 p 34) or an electronic seeing aid (p 37), such that these devices become part of our functioning selves. But the proposal that humanity could adapt to and thrive in a wholly artificial world, whether in some kind of capsule on Earth or on another planet, is of a different order. Let us accept, for the sake of the argument, that we *are* capable of creating the human-life-supporting capsule that could go on doing so indefinitely. Although it is not possible to prove we would be unable to adapt to and thrive within it, the evidence indicates otherwise. E.O. Wilson points out that '[h]umanity co-evolved with the rest of life on this particular planet; other worlds are not in our genes' (2001 p 330). Hannah Arendt agrees: 'the earth is the very quintessence of the human condition, and earthly nature, for all we know, may be unique in the universe in providing human beings with a habitat in which they can move and breathe without effort and without artifice' (1958/1998 p 2). Earth is humanity's home. Most humans choose to connect with nature in one way or another, given sufficient leisure, finding it restful. Wilson, who draws our attention to this and similar tendencies, calls them 'biophilia': 'the connection that human beings subconsciously seek with the rest of life' (2001 p 334). Environmental journalist Michael McCarthy names this connection 'joy' (McCarthy 2015). He cites a study of patients who recovered from the same operation a great deal faster when they awoke to a window view of

²² 'It is [...] possible for some to dream that people will go on living comfortably in a biologically impoverished world. They suppose that a prosthetic environment is within the power of technology, that human life can still flourish in a completely humanised world, where medicines would all be synthesised from chemicals off the shelf, food grown from a few dozen domestic crop species, the atmosphere and climate regulated by computer-driven fusion energy, and the earth made over until it becomes a literal spaceship rather than a metaphorical one, with people reading displays and touching buttons on the bridge. Such is the terminus of the philosophy of exemptionalism: do not weep for the past, humanity is a new order of life, let species die if they block progress, scientific and technological genius will find another way. Look up and see the stars awaiting us' (Wilson 2001 p 332).

greenery as opposed to a view of a brick wall (pp 60f); repeatable evidence of some deep-seated restorative power of nature on humans. Research commissioned by Natural England showed significant benefits of nature-based interventions for mental health care (Bragg and Atkins 2016). Former Director-General of the National Trust Fiona Reynolds argues for the fundamental need humans have for natural beauty: it is not a luxury (Reynolds 2016). On these accounts, we would be unlikely to thrive in an artificial environment, even were we to succeed in creating one. It would be the ‘Age of Loneliness’, the Eremozoic Era, declares Wilson (2006 p 91). Our culture, who we are physically and emotionally, evolved through two million years, across thousands of generations, during which we have been profoundly influenced by our co-evolution with all the other creatures of the Earth. ‘Only in the last moment of human history has the delusion arisen that people can flourish apart from the rest of the living world’ (2001 p 331).

b) Calculate our way out of the problem?

The utilitarian approach to moral thinking and policy making, articulated by Jeremy Bentham, has dominated responses to many of the challenges humans have faced. Bentham argued that morality is a matter of mathematical calculation. His model proposed that an action was good if more people are benefited than harmed, and not good if more were harmed than benefited (Bentham 1789/1962). The ‘benefit-cost ratio’ is an explicitly acknowledged basis for policy-making in the UK.²³ But the ecological challenge cannot be solved this way. The challenge faces the entire planet, and the entire human family, so it confounds the principle of benefitting greater numbers and sacrificing fewer. If only some communities or countries take the measures necessary (whatever they are) to ameliorate the damage, they will be penalised economically and neither they nor those who take no measures will be helped, because if everyone does not participate, the measures do not take effect. The atmosphere cannot be carved up and handed out only to some people. The challenge can be

²³ For example in a number of Government Departments, an approach which has been debated in seminars at Westminster Abbey Institute in 2014 - 2017.

understood by analogy with the Prisoners' Dilemma.²⁴ *Gestell* mindsets will work through the numerous permutations algorithmically to try and calculate the best possible choice for A or B, as they would do in climate change negotiations. But we only gain if we all work together, not: I will if you will, but: I will because I believe you will too; and that requires 'an act of trust in my right or capacity to act and give' (Williams 2000 p 72). Our *Gestell* selves cannot see how that could possibly happen.

Another analogy that serves to make the point that calculations cannot address the kind of challenge that the ecological crisis presents is offered by Amartya Sen (Sen 2010). Anne, Bob and Carla quarrel over one flute which each of them wants. Anne is the only one who can play the flute (the others do not dispute this) so thinks she should have the flute. If we only knew this argument we would probably want to give Anne the flute. Bob is the poorest and has no other toys whereas Anne and Carla, as both agree, have plenty of other toys. If we only knew Bob's argument we would want to give the flute to him. Carla made the flute, over several weeks and with great care; again this is not disputed by the others and again, if this was the only argument we heard, we would say Carla should have the flute (2010 p 12). Justice cannot be meted out if only part of the story is known. But nor can it be meted out algorithmically if all three are known. If 'flute' stands for 'habitat', how can any solution be right that does not find a way of granting the flute to all three children? As with the Prisoner's Dilemma, something else will have to intervene to resolve the matter, but for the *Gestell* self, one narrative has to be favoured over the others, or nothing at all can be done. The *Gestell* self cannot see how else to resolve the question, even if she recognises that those whose narratives are denied are themselves denied. A brutalist solution in which some humans retreat and survive on a few islands kept cool by surrounding water, while everyone else

²⁴ The Prisoners' Dilemma, cited by McGilchrist (2009 p 145), was devised by Flood and Dresher in 1950 and poses the following: two prisoners, A and B, interrogated separately, are both offered choices between testifying against the other or remaining silent. If A testifies against B and B remains silent, A will be let off and B will receive 10 years' imprisonment, and *vice versa*. If both A and B testify against each other, both will receive two years' imprisonment. If both remain silent, both will receive six months' imprisonment, the maximum sentence the court can give in the absence of evidence.

burns up, a predicted Lovelockian outcome (Lovelock 2006 p 60), is the default, not the intentional result of attempting to solve the ecological challenge by utilitarian means.

c) Get rich first, then mend the planet?

This argument suggests that addressing environmental concerns can only happen after a certain level of development has taken place. Environmentally friendly living is a luxury that many societies cannot afford, goes the argument: goodness is expensive and can only be paid for by the rich. For E.F. Schumacher this is a continuation, which he rightly rejects, of the Keynesian view that ‘avarice and usury and precaution must be our gods for a little longer still’ (Schumacher 1975 p 40). We have seen that the rich cannot be relied upon to lead in environmentally sustainable life styles, as wealthy nations squabble self-interestedly over international agreements to reduce carbon dioxide emissions,²⁵ and the greatest per capita ecological footprints are consistently generated by the nations with the highest incomes (WWF 2014 p 37). It is the mindset that is the problem, not the lack of money. As Naess observes: ‘it is an embarrassing scandal that the rich industrial nations do not use the urgency of work to be done to overcome the global ecological crisis as a basis for the significant reduction of unemployment. The jobs in this area are clearly more labour intensive than jobs in industry’ (2016 p 101). The scandal *is* embarrassing, so why are we so incapable of addressing it? What capricious god has the economy become, that we cannot make it serve our need for meaningful work but rather are forced into the jobs it greedily demands that we (and only some of us) do? Our helplessness in the face of this realisation is a demonstration of our enslavement to a *Gestell* perspective.

d) When things are really bad, humans will change

George Marshall (2014), who has studied and engaged with numerous environmental organisations and their campaigns, understands that our failure to respond comes out of the way we are and think.

²⁵ For example, at the time of writing, the US is threatening the fragile hope in an international political solution by withdrawing from the 2015 Paris Agreement of the UN Framework on Climate Change.

He suggests that we have a default mechanism in us to avoid the anxiety that prefigures the changes that the ecological crisis requires in us and of us. With other major threats, there are ‘clear markers that would normally lead our brains to overrule our short-term interests’ (for example Hitler invading Czechoslovakia in 1939) but these do not happen with climate change, so ‘we actively conspire with each other, and mobilise our own biases, to keep it perpetually in the background’ (pp 228f). If only, think some environmental campaigners, a sufficiently devastating natural event clearly caused by climate change would happen. Then governments and people would wake up and policies would change, as they had to upon the eve of war. (What a terrible thing to wish for.) But when weather disasters do hit, such as Hurricanes Katrina in Louisiana in 2005, Sandy in New Jersey in 2012 and Harvey in Texas in 2017, even if climate change can be named as a cause, it is never straightforwardly so. And such disasters turn out, as Marshall notices (p 9) to be precisely *not* the time to talk about bigger causes. People are too busy recovering and restoring their nests, discovering a new neighbourliness in the face of adversity, attending to their very real and present needs, to be concerned about global climate change.

We will not change even if things become really bad, says Marshall, because we are in the wrong story. In his book *The Myth Gap* former UN adviser Alex Evans agrees (Evans 2017). We make sense of data through narratives, and the narrative that has forced fundamental change and galvanised collective responses hitherto has been the enemy narrative, appropriate for war. It is the narrative with which the technological paradigm fits best, as *Gestell* selves make common cause with others because there is a common enemy. But the enemy narrative does not make sense of data when the enemy is all of us. ‘If there is an enemy, it is really our ‘shadow’ — our greedy internal child whom we don’t wish to acknowledge or recognise and who compels us to project our own unacceptable attributes onto others’ (Marshall 2014 p 43).

I conclude that the need to seek salvation from *Gestell* subjectivity itself is not to be avoided. It is a harder and more radical task; nevertheless it offers the potential not only to cease

the harm to the planet's distressed spheres but also save humanity from its own 'redoubled activity or despair' (Arendt 1958/1998 p 293).

v) *Salvation from Gestell: the limitations of phenomenology and the porous self*

In order to be 'saved' from *Gestell*, Heidegger writes that we have to take heed of the 'place or time of the arising of the technological point of view' (1949/1977 p 17). We have to return to the place whence the *Gestell* perspective arises, which means entering a phenomenological (rather than a historical) process whereby we cease to 'stare at the technological' (p 17) and catch sight of the coming into being of that way of seeing. There we have the chance to think differently.

Heidegger's earlier work *Being and Time* pushed the definition of Husserl's phenomenology to the extreme of uncovering the Being of entities: 'only as phenomenology is ontology possible' (Heidegger 1927/1962 p 60). But Heidegger retains a transcendent Being or self, a subject that is not itself open to transformation, criticised, as Werner Jeanrond notices, by Terry Eagleton for so doing.²⁶ I want to suggest that the undoing of *Gestell* subjectivity will not happen through a transcendent being which has been caught in one way of thinking then 'deciding' to take up a different way of thinking, which is the implication of Heidegger's approach. Heidegger's Being is too resonant with Descartes' *cogito* self, also a 'transcendent being', which is able through its 'certainty of self' (Arendt 1958/1998 p 280) to render itself 'master and possessor of nature' (Descartes 1637/1970 p 119), and Descartes, as we saw, is where Taylor's buffered self finds its 'complete definition' (Taylor 2007 p 133). Heidegger's approach will not, in my view, produce the subjectivity needed that will seek to live in a way that does not harm the planet. Rather, the self itself must be undone, otherwise the belief that nature (in this case, human nature) can be controlled will not be challenged. Its undoing, I propose, will come about by means of its 'wounding' that both creates but also restores its porosity.

²⁶ 'All [Heidegger] does instead [of Husserl] is to set up a different kind of metaphysical entity — *Dasein* itself. His work represents a flight from history as much as an encounter with it; and the same can be said of the fascism with which he flirted' (quoted in Jeanrond 1991 p 109).

The term ‘porous’ is taken from Charles Taylor (2007), who places it in a historical context of a medieval world. Taylor shows the distinction between the porous selves we were and the buffered selves that we have become in, for example, the change between what was ‘inside’ and what was ‘outside’. Today, he argues, the ‘inside-outside’ geography creates boundaries that were not there 500 years ago. Now we think of making meaning out of the world by which we are surrounded. Then, meaning was visited upon us by the spirits of the world and beyond. Now, outside things impinge, we are affected by what goes on outside, but we can objectify and make sense of it, for example we think of ‘catching’ a cold from outside. We can observe outside things and take a view on them. Then, we were affected in a third way, over which we had less or no control, because the thing that had power, the object or agent, could bring us within its forcefield and impose quite alien things on us. Hence, then, the medieval notion of being possessed (Taylor 2007 pp 32f). Taylor’s buffered self, which the porous self becomes, is resonant with Heidegger’s *Gestell* self, as we saw, and certainly part of the task of undoing *Gestell* involves reaching behind it to a time and place when it did not dominate human subjectivity. But the task is not a historical one in the sense that it will call for the restoration of an earlier age; we would not easily return to a language of ‘being possessed’, and in any case, as J.R. McNeill, E.O. Wilson and others suggest, our pre-industrial subjectivity was not intentionally benign towards nature. The task, rather, involves finding a way of piercing the buffered *Gestell* self itself and finding its porosity now, in our twenty-first century world, albeit a porosity that will be resonant with the pre-industrial self. In this we are helped by modern neuroscience which has detected a pre-cognitive relationality in our selfhood.²⁷ ‘Porosity’ is not intended to imply that the self disappears altogether, rather that its fundamental connectivity or relationality is asserted, which, by Taylor’s and Schilbach’s accounts, is both ancient and originary. Its restoration opens up the possibility for new ways of being in the

²⁷ In the work of Leonard Schilbach and colleagues, described and discussed in Chapter Three, where ‘porosity’ is further defined.

world that are predicated upon relationship, respect and even reverence for the intrinsic value of nature and humanity. My argument, then, is that salvation from *Gestell* subjectivity is to be found in that which restores porosity.

I propose to show that the Short and Long Texts attributed to Julian of Norwich can help with this task.²⁸ Julian's encounter with Christ in her revelations transformed her subjectivity, and the 'world' that was created out of the encounter, that is, the Short and Long Texts, is capable of transforming the subjectivity of their reader in turn. I aim to show that the text draws the reader himself into powerful encounter, as Julian makes herself not the object of the text but the means within the text for its reader to undergo what she did. With disarming language that has the communicative power to soften and then cut open the *Gestell* self, a transformation of perception takes place: the text does what it speaks of. This, I will argue, is the wounding the *Gestell* self needs in order to become porous and to be saved from the technological paradigm he is bound by. I am supported in this turn by Oliver Davies' argument that reading a mystical text like Julian's has an immediate effect that is 'very intimate, formative, and distinctive' (Davies 2017 p 13).

Heidegger acknowledges that the 'fine arts' can by 'poetic revealing' foster the growth of the 'saving power' that is needed to escape from *Gestell* subjectivity (Heidegger 1949/1977 p 19). But it takes the hermeneutics of Paul Ricoeur, who critiques phenomenology, to see how 'poetic' texts have the power to summon and change the apparently transcendent self, as I will describe in more detail in Chapter Three. My turn to the Julian of Norwich texts will be helped by a hermeneutical approach that is guided by, and builds upon, Ricoeur.

²⁸ Julian of Norwich was an anchoress who lived in the second half of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth centuries, thus at a time when, Taylor says, human subjectivity was porous. As Chapter Three of the thesis will make clear, while this historical context is relevant, it is not merely Julian's historical place that determines her value to us today. The porosity she evinces and teaches does not require the reader to become medieval in order to become porous himself. And as I will show, there are numerous difficulties that stand in the way of identifying the Julian of history with the Julian in the Short and Long Texts, so my thesis cannot depend upon the fact that the Julian of the texts was a medieval person.

Concluding summary

This chapter has explored the kind of human subjectivity that gives rise to behaviour that harms the planet, arguing that Heidegger characterises it best with his account of a *Gestell* world in which everything is both enframed and enframing. *Gestell* subjectivity closely resembles the accounts of René Descartes' *cogito* self that sees itself as 'master and possessor' of nature, of Hannah Arendt's *homo faber*, of Martin Buber's *It not Thou*, of Iain McGilchrist's left brain hemisphere, of Pope Francis' technological paradigm, and of Charles Taylor's buffered self. The historical shift into and through the industrial revolution that gave humanity the apparent power to command and control nature was seen as evidence of *Gestell* rather than causal of it. The *Gestell* perspective harnesses nature's forces and stores them in readiness to be used at humanity's behest, rather than leaving them to flow and using them only as they emerge, responding to and working with their intrinsic spirit: the difference between a hydroelectric dam and a windmill. Not only is all of nature regarded as being in 'standing reserve' but also humanity itself is enslaved to this perspective. The unimaginative utilitarianism of the *Gestell* mindset can only think of technological solutions to the planet's stresses, which will have their own unforeseen harmful consequences. Growing the economy is not a necessary first step before mending the planet: rich countries do not, just because they are rich, use fewer ecological resources (on the contrary) or negotiate unselfishly in climate change agreements. Rather, economic growth has become the utilitarian god served by enslaved humanity. Major climate change disasters do not bring about a change in behaviour. Humanity has to attend to changing the *Gestell* mindset to which we are enslaved. The 'porous' self, a term taken from Taylor's characterisation of the pre-modern self that preceded *Gestell*, though not wholly defined as that, is suggested as the one to which our twenty-first century selves need to be restored. Although Heidegger accurately diagnoses the challenge, his solution is not adequate as he retains a transcendent self redolent of Descartes' *cogito* self. For salvation from the *Gestell* subjectivity by which we are bound, I have suggested the Julian texts can be our transforming guide, read with the

help of Ricoeur whose hermeneutics recognise the fallibility of the reading self. Julian's texts have the communicative 'poetic' power to summon their reader's subjectivity and restore his porosity.

CHAPTER TWO

Addressing the Historical and Manuscript Challenges of Julian of Norwich

Introduction

If I am to draw on the Julian texts to transform our twenty-first century selves, I have to explain how I am going to read them. Even before describing the hermeneutical approach I develop to foreground the text's ability to 'wound' the *Gestell* self and restore its porosity, which is the endeavour of the next chapter, I have to account for some significant historical and manuscript difficulties, namely, that little is known about the text's author and the manuscripts are late, at odds with each other and unattestable to the historical Julian. I attend in some detail to the difficulties because the uncertainty they give rise to provides support for my hermeneutical approach that does not depend upon detailed knowledge of the author, origin of text, or a twenty-first century scholar being able to imagine herself in the fourteenth century and to think in the same way as Julian or her original audience. This detailed attention also addresses the concerns of medieval scholars who accuse theologians of making assertions about Julian without recognising the questionable historical and manuscript assumptions upon which they are based. This short chapter, then, will i) explore the little that is known about the historical Julian of Norwich; and ii) clarify the status of the extant manuscripts. I finish with methodological conclusions that do justice to the challenges and make way for the post-Ricoeurian hermeneutical approach to be developed in Chapter Three.

i) Evidence for the fourteenth century Julian of Norwich

We have independent external evidence of an anchoress, living in the cell abutting the church of St Julian in Norwich in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, which I will very briefly review: a) from legacies left to her; b) from the account of a visit by her contemporary, Margery Kempe; and c) from the rubrics added by scribes to the extant manuscripts of Julian's revelations.

a) Evidence from legacies

We know there was an anchoress called Julian living at the church of St Julian in Norwich at the end of the fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth centuries from the legacies that were bequested to her. Roger Reed, rector of St Michael's, Coslany, in Norwich, left two shillings to 'Julian anakorite' on 20 March 1393-4. The will of Thomas Emund, a chantry priest of Ayslesham in Norfolk, was proved in 1404, leaving a bequest of one shilling to 'Juliane anchorite apud St Juliane in Norwice'. John Plumpton, citizen of Norwich, made his will on 24 November 1415 and it was proved four days later, bequeathing forty pence to 'le ankeres in ecclesia sancti Juliani de Conesford in Norwice' and twelve pence each to her serving-maid and to Alice, her former maid. Isabel Ufford, daughter of Thomas Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, left bequests to the house of Augustinian canonesses she joined after her second husband died, and to other religious houses and to one recluse: 'item jeo devyse a Julian recluz a Norwich 20s' (Watson and Jenkins 2006 pp 5, 431ff). Ufford died in 1416 though her will may have been made earlier. She joined the religious house sometime during or after 1382. The name 'Julian' is argued by Colledge and Walsh to have been taken from the church to which the anchorage was attached and on these grounds the legacies could refer to a succession of anchoresses or anchorites living there (Colledge and Walsh 1978 p 34). The Plumpton and Ufford bequests might, then, have been to such successors of 'our' Julian, though Plumpton's Julian was also a woman. However, Barry Windeatt contests this, arguing that there is little historical evidence for anchorites changing their names, and noting, further, that the name 'Julian' was a girl's name in the fourteenth century (Windeatt 2016 p xiv).

b) Evidence from her contemporary Margery Kempe

Margery Kempe's attestation of the existence of a Julian who at least resembles the Julian found in the texts of the revelations carries weight. Kempe writes of her 'holy spechys & dalyawns' (Meech and Allen 1940 p 42.12) with the anchoress. She had been, she says, directed by Christ to go to Norwich to visit the 'Vykyr' of St Stephen's (p 38.12), the Carmelite Friar 'Wyllyam Sowthfeld' (p

41.2f) and ‘an ankres in the same cyte whych hyte Dame Ielyan’ (p 42.8f), with whom she discussed, among other things, the private vow of chastity she had made with her husband. Kempe writes that they made the vow on ‘Mydsomyr Evyn’ (p 23.9), and in a footnote to this line (p 269) Meech and Allen, extrapolating from the textual evidence, propose that the date was 23rd June 1413. On this argument, Kempe’s visit would have taken place at a time when a Julian who may be ‘our’ Julian was living as an anchoress in Norwich. Kempe says she told Julian of her own revelations and asked her if there was any deceit in them; Julian tells her to be obedient to the will of God and fulfil them with all her might if to do so was not against the worship of God or profit of her ‘euyn-cristen’ (p 42.22). The term ‘evyn cristen’, and the sentiment behind the advice, are familiar in the texts of Julian’s revelations.

c) Evidence from the scribal rubrics of the manuscripts

The Short Text rubric, a scribal introduction to the copy made, by its own account, in 1413, refers to Julian alive and living in Norwich as an anchoress (‘recluse’) at the time (Windeatt 2016 p xix), which substantiates the evidence of the Emund bequest, proved in 1404 and hence before 1413, but not Plumpton’s, proved in 1415. The rubric at the end of both complete manuscripts of the Long Text does not write of her being alive but does attest to the revelations being Julian’s. The date of her revelations, 1373 (LT p 285.3f),²⁹ is given within the Long Text itself, but at no point in either the Long or the Short Text does the character ‘Julian’ refer to herself explicitly as an anchoress.

Although it is likely, it is not conclusive, then, that one or more of the anchoresses, whom we know lived in a cell abutting the church of St Julian in Norwich at the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth centuries, was the author of the Short and Long Texts.³⁰

²⁹ All references to the Julian texts are taken from Colledge and Walsh 1978, justified below.

³⁰ The Julian of the text, as will become evident, would be delighted at the way in which she remains hidden.

ii) Manuscript challenges

a) The provenance of the extant manuscripts

There are two extant texts, which I am following Colledge and Walsh (1978) in calling the Short Text and the Long Text, abbreviated to ST and LT. The Julian of the texts speaks of experiencing her revelations in May 1373 (LT p 285.3f) when she was thirty years old (LT p 289.2), aligning her chronologically with the historical Julian. But the manuscripts themselves are unstable: all of them are written later, and most of them much later, than when the historical Julian was alive, and they do not always agree with each other. This means that the manuscripts are also incapable of demonstrating conclusively that the Julian in the text is the Julian(s) of the legacies and the Margery Kempe visit. I will identify the challenges in relation to each manuscript in turn.

The earliest manuscript, referred to as ‘A’ by Colledge and Walsh and textual scholars thereafter, is a copy of ST within a collection of other writings of the period including those of Richard Rolle, Jan van Ruysbroeck and Marguerite Porete, held at the British Library (British Library MS Additional 37790, fols. 97-115 (formerly the Amherst MS)).³¹ It seems to have been written by one person (Colledge and Walsh 1978 p 1) and annotated and corrected by various hands (Windeatt 2016 p liii). The lettering is consistently well-formed, suggested by Colledge and Walsh to be of the mid fifteenth century (p 1) and Watson and Jenkins agree (Watson and Jenkins 2006 p 33) as does Windeatt (2016 p liii). The introductory rubric says it was written in 1413, and that Julian was still alive (‘on life’) and living as an anchoress (‘recluse’) at the time:

Here es a visionn, schewed be the goodenes of god to a deuoute womann, and hir name es Julyan, that is recluse atte Norwyche and y³²itt ys onn lyfe, anno domini millesimo CCCCxiij, in the whilke visyonn er fulle many comfortabyllle wordes and gretly styrrande to alle thaye that desires to be Crystes looverse (ST p 201.1ff).

³¹ I read A in December 2015.

³² Colledge and Walsh use the character yogh here and elsewhere. For the sake of clarity, I replace it with ‘gh’ or ‘y’.

A, however, is a copy of a copy. If ST is a basis for the manuscripts of LT, it may be that A itself is not the one, but, in common with the fluid treatment of medieval manuscripts, passages may have been rewritten, phrases cut and it may even be the case that passages from LT had been added ‘back’ into later copies of ST (Watson and Jenkins 2006 pp 33f). As Watson and Jenkins point out, however, if there were such cross-fertilisations, ‘it is hard to see how anyone copying [ST] could have consulted [LT] without becoming swamped by its additions’ (p 34).

The Westminster text (Westminster Cathedral Treasury MS 4 fols. 72-112)³³ consists of a set of excerpts from the Long Text which are included in an anonymous compilation of religious works in Middle English.³⁴ The date of the compilation, judging from the dialect, is early fifteenth century, placing it closer to Julian, though the manuscript in which it survives is c 1500 (Watson and Jenkins 2006 pp 417f); it is the only pre-Dissolution manuscript of LT (Colledge and Walsh 1978 pp 8, 27). The manuscript runs continuously with no breaks or headings, recording passages of what would be read as teaching from the first, second, ninth, tenth and fourteenth revelations, with some ‘plausible’ readings unique to this manuscript (Windeatt 2016 p lvii).

Bibliothèque Nationale MS Fonds anglais 40, referred to (in the UK) as the Paris text, since it lives in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, contains only the Long Text.³⁵ The handwriting is much more clumsy and unskilled than that of A, and is thought to be an ‘unconvincing imitation, each letter individually formed, of a hand of c. 1500’ (Colledge and Walsh 1978 p 7). The manuscript itself is thought to be dated around 1650. Precisely because the hand is ‘clumsy and inept’, and a by rote imitation of an earlier hand, Colledge and Walsh decided to use this as the basis for their scholarly text of 1978, as it might be surmised that the scribe had no wish to change anything and certainly not to correct anything (Colledge and Walsh 1978 p 7). Their preference has been shared by other editors of scholarly texts: Denise Baker chose to use the Paris text as the basis

³³ Kept by Westminster Abbey on behalf of Westminster Cathedral.

³⁴ I read the Westminster MS in January 2017.

³⁵ I read Fonds anglais 40 (‘Paris’) in May 2016.

for her Norton critical translation (Baker 2005) and it features as the main source of the hybrid text of Watson and Jenkins (Watson and Jenkins 2006). However Marion Glasscoe (1993) and the most recent critical edition by Windeatt (2016) use Sloane (see below). Windeatt's argument for not using Paris as his base text is that it or one of its ancestor manuscripts has been subject to a process of dialectal translation into East Midlands Standard English (Windeatt 2016 pp lviiff) and is therefore some distance from the language the historical Julian would have used.

There are two manuscripts of LT known as the first (British Library MS Sloane 2499) and second (British Library MS Sloane 3705) Sloane texts, because Sir Hans Sloane acquired and preserved them (Jenkins 2009 p 121). Both are in the British Library. The second is an eighteenth century copy of the first, and for that reason I will not refer to it again. The first Sloane text, hereafter referred to as 'Sloane', contains only the Long Text and is, like Paris, dated around 1650.³⁶ The 'sprawling and unattractive hand' (Colledge and Walsh 1978 p 8) is thought to resemble that of Mother Clementina Cary, daughter of Lady Blount, to whom Cressy (see below) dedicated his printed edition. Mother Clementina, who died in 1671, founded the English Benedictine convent of Our Lady of Good Hope at Paris, the daughter house of Our Lady of Consolation at Cambrai. If it is not Mother Clementina's hand, then it is a hand of the same school. The quality of the paper is poor and the text is written on both sides of the paper, sometimes obscuring what is on the converse, particularly in the first eight folios, and the handwriting deteriorates as the text goes on. Marion Glasscoe justifies her use of this manuscript for her critical text of 1978, reissued in 1993, with the argument that it is more faithful to the historical Julian's original diction (Glasscoe 1993 p ix). It is not favoured by other scholars because of its clear intention to 'modernise' (Watson and Jenkins 2006 p 26), giving the lie to Glasscoe; however Windeatt agrees with Glasscoe, arguing that Sloane, in its northern form of East Anglian language, uses the dialect that the historical Julian would have used, and this, for him, is 'decisive', because it is 'more likely to preserve closeness to her ways and patterns of thought' (Windeatt 2016 p lxvii).

³⁶ I read Sloane in July 2016.

The Cressy printed Long Text (1670), kept in the British Library, entitles itself: ‘XVI revelations of divine love, showed to a devout servant of our Lord, called Mother Juliana, an anchorete of Norwich: who lived in the days of King Edward III.³⁷ Published by RFS Cressy MDCLXX.’ There are printer’s flowers on the second and third leaves which are identical to ornaments in pamphlets by William Assheton and John Gadbury, both printed in England in 1670, indicating that the Cressy publication was also printed in England (Colledge and Walsh p 6). Cressy was a Catholic convert who was for a time priest and confessor to the exiled English Benedictine nuns at the convent of Our Lady of Consolation at Cambrai, and in 1651 to their daughter house, the convent of Our Lady of Good Hope, in Paris (Summit 2009 p 31f). Like other Catholics at the Restoration in 1670, Cressy was ready to return to England. Here, then, we surmise, ‘when Catholic publishing returned home’ (Summit 2009 p 31), he published his edition of Julian of Norwich, based on the Paris and Sloane complete versions of the Long Text that had been used by the nuns in France. Cressy dedicated the edition to Lady Mary Blount of Sodington and urged her to allow Julian to cross the 300 years that stood between them and speak directly to Mary as she is revealed to Julian. Julian ‘intended it for You’ (Summit 2009 p 32). As Windeatt observes, the edition is of little value to scholars who have access to Paris and Sloane (2016 p lxiii); for me, however, Cressy’s dedication points to the same power in Julian to cross the centuries and speak directly to the reader that I am calling upon today.

Austin Baker was priest to the nuns at Cambrai in the seventeenth century. He had asked Robert Cotton to send works of medieval devotion for the nuns ‘their lives being contemplative the common books of the world are not for their purpose, and little or nothing is in these daies printed in Englaish that is proper for them’ yet ‘there were manie good English books in olde time’ (Summit 2009 p 29). The ensuing anthology sent by Robert Cotton included extracts from the thirteenth revelation in LT, copied from Cressy or Paris (Windeatt 2016 p lxiv), and is known as the Upholland manuscript, as it was formerly kept at St Joseph’s College, Upholland, Lancashire.

³⁷ Edward III reigned from 1327 to 1377.

In summary, the rubric of the manuscript of ST dates itself 1413, when a Julian of Norwich was alive, but is itself a copy made around 90 years later; the Westminster manuscript of excerpts from LT was written around 100 years after the historical Julian(s) had died; and the LT manuscripts of Paris and Sloane around 150 years after that. Cressy and Upholland, also seventeenth century, offer no further evidence of original authorship. Thus, none of the extant manuscripts is contemporary with the anchoress(es) Julian of the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, and none can demonstrate conclusively that they originated from her.

b) Dating the Short and Long Texts in relation to each other

It is not even possible to prove that the Short Text was written first and the Long Text later. The copies, all late, do not offer any external evidence for the chronological relationship of ST and LT. Internal evidence can be gathered but it is not conclusive. Although LT refers to Julian's reflections over twenty years (LT p 520.86), and so can be surmised to have been written later in Julian's life, internally ST has no reference to when it was written. A passage in ST which seems to assert a special role for contemplatives is absent from LT and could be relevant to the chronological relationship of the two texts. The men and women 'that desire [...] to lyeve contemplatyfelye' are contrasted with 'thaye that er occupied wilfullye in erthelye besines, and evermare sekis worldly wele' (ST p 215.41ff). The same point is made, not to be pre-occupied with worldly things, in LT, but is addressed generally, not to a particular group. It simply encourages 'vs' to 'loue and haue god that is vnmade' (LT p 301.24ff). It might, then, be argued that the difference between the two texts on contemplatives confirms that ST should be dated before LT, since Julian clearly comes down on the side of all her 'evynn cristen', not exclusive contemplatives, and the change could indicate a development in her thinking. But she is already thinking this way in ST, e.g. 'And in alle this I was mekyllle styrrede in charyte to myne evynn cristene, that thaye myght *alle* see and knawe th³⁸e same that I sawe' (ST p 224.8f, my italics). It could equally be argued that the passage was

³⁸ Colledge and Walsh use the character thorn here and elsewhere; for ease of reading I replace it with 'th' as Paris and Sloane do.

added for other reasons, for example, that self-styled contemplatives had sought Julian's advice and she added in a reference to them. It is also conceivable that in times of great fear of accusations of heresy, ST was written after LT, with the contemplatives added, but the 'difficult' sections omitted, as indeed they have been excluded from the LT extracts of the Westminster manuscript.³⁹ This reverse dating is of course not proven, and there remains at least one difficult passage suggesting universal salvation in the Short Text that is omitted from the Long: 'for in mankynde that schalle be saffe is comprehende alle, that ys alle that ys made and the makere of alle, and he that loves thus, he is safe' (ST p 221.30ff). The reverse dating hypothesis is briefly surveyed by Alexandra Barratt (Barratt 2009 p 18 and fn). Barry Windeatt points out that ST was deemed important enough to have been composed or copied as late as 1413, after LT would have been written (Windeatt 2015 p xxi), but argues that, on balance, autobiographical details such as that the curate arrived with a child (ST p 208.22ff) and that Julian's mother tried to close her eyes, thinking she was dead (ST p 234.29ff), omitted from LT, are more likely to have been recorded in a testimony written nearer in time to the experience rather than to have been inserted into an abridged version later. The case made by Reynolds and Holloway (2001) that Westminster was written first, followed by LT, with ST being written in 1413 as an abridgement of both 'has not won general acceptance' (Windeatt 2016 p xix). Nicholas Watson disagrees with Windeatt's autobiographical argument, and handles differently the questions related to fear of controversy, using these to date both texts later than the consensus of mid-1370s for ST and mid-1390s for LT (Watson 1993),⁴⁰ but nevertheless supports the view that ST was chronologically first and LT second. For my thesis, the not entirely implausible suggestion that ST may have been second simply adds to the uncertainty about Julian and her writings. Internal evidence, which I accept, confesses that LT at least was the product of many years of study, but where ST sits in relation to that remains unclear.

³⁹ For example, references to the motherhood of God and Christ and the revelation 'example' of the lord and the servant which attributes the fall not to disobedience or greed but to anxious and loving obedience.

⁴⁰ Watson points out that while the dating of the Julian texts is uncertain, that of responses to Lollard heresies is not, and these, together with corresponding internal textual evidence, can be used to argue for a 'more prolonged and hesitant' composition of both texts (Watson 1993 p 641).

c) Manuscript culture and the demise of the critical text

The plethora of late and conflicting manuscripts means that none can be claimed as the ‘critical’ text for Julian. A modern translation that does not do justice to the textual difficulties falls short, and should not be used to make claims about what the historical Julian said or meant. Barratt (2009) is particularly scathing about theologians presuming to comment on the historical Julian’s theology on the basis of such manuscript uncertainty. She argues that we should have good critical editions of each of the manuscripts, rather than trying to conflate them or choose between them or use one as a base and interpose bits of others where it seems to make more sense to us. Otherwise we cannot avoid our own projections on to Julian’s meaning. Watson and Jenkins discuss this in their introduction (p 27f) but still go on to produce a hybrid text based upon Paris interposed by Sloane, Westminster, Cressy and Upholland. An attempt has been made to provide such a comprehensive edition of each of the manuscripts by Reynolds and Bolton Holloway (2001), but these include what Watson and Jenkins regard as ‘highly speculative’ histories of the composition and origins of the different versions (Watson and Jenkins 2006 p 462).

The idea of a ‘definitive form’ for a medieval work is in any case foreign to that culture (Watson and Jenkins 2006 p 27). A collection of essays on manuscript culture (Johnston and Van Dussen 2015) convincingly brings into question the attempt to create critical texts which try to reflect as far as possible the original author’s intention. From the moment transmission begins and words emerge on a page, changes take place to the text, depending on where the writing takes place, what the scribe’s intentions are, what the readers’ intentions are, and the life of the manuscript after it has left one pair of hands and reached other pairs. Each manuscript has its own history, and should be treated as an artifact in its own right. As Stephen Nichols argues, modern (as distinct from medieval) philologists are used to the idea of a ‘fixed text reflecting as far as possible its author’s original intention’ (Nichols 2015 p 35). They have made the assumption that a printed text constructed from many manuscripts of a work purged of all the extraneous matter *is* the critical text, somehow closest to the original intention of the author. The modern philologist has not seen that

this notion of a critical edition is a modern phenomenon, arguably as far away from any supposed original as it is possible to be. All that is regarded by the modern eye as extraneous, such as ‘paintings, rubrics, commentaries, marginalia and decorations’ (Nichols 2015 p 35), seen as detracting from the text, making it susceptible to scribal error, improvement and commentary, are intrinsic to the medieval manuscript and part of the creation of the text. This means that the printed book that the earlier manuscript versions of a text have become does not reflect any originary state but only ‘modern principles of textual scholarship’ (p 35). It is as though we were claiming to understand a human being by confining our research to his or her ‘production’ from gestation to birth, as Johnston and Van Dussen suggest (Johnston and Van Dussen 2015 p 3). We know this would be to miss most of what a human being was: we should include cultural, social and environmental influences that take place continuously from birth to later life. Similarly, a text produced in manuscript form is never static but goes on to experience numerous changes, and should be studied as such. Moreover, there was a manuscript economy. Pascale Bourgain writes of the ways in which texts circulated that could well have been the story of the Julian texts: they would have been copied at different points of their creation, not necessarily after they had been finished, memorised, retold, spread by lending (‘renting’), fleeing from persecution or war, travelling on pilgrimage, being bought and being sold (Bourgain 2015 p 147). Seth Lerer proposes the term ‘premodern book’, which should be understood as an individual object in its own time (Lerer 2015 p 19). Arthur Bahr looks at miscellaneity and variance in the medieval book, noting that ‘the range of modern theoretical approaches to manuscript culture is itself born of variance’ (Bahr 2015 p 181). Medieval textual composition was collaborative, as Andrew Taylor explains, using Bonaventure’s categories of those who simply copied; those who copied and compiled; those who copied and annotated for the purpose of clarifying; and those who copied and wrote their own material, but retained their own material as principle. Only the last of these might be called an author; the others are respectively scribe, compiler and commentator (Taylor 2015 p 199). Although Bonaventure places the scribe and the author at either end of the spectrum, their work

could not always be clearly distinguished. All of it required scribal labour. To demonstrate this point, Taylor describes the famous picture of Jean Miélot, secretary of Philip the Good of Burgundy, with the paraphernalia of the scribe: knife, ink, weights, paper, quills; but also a collection of books by him on his desk, at his feet, and on a stool in front of him, all in addition to the book from which he is copying (p 200).

Daniel Wakelin offers a nuanced argument about the implications of scribal corrections, avoiding the suggestion that medieval copyists felt they could do what they liked. Focusing on the content of the text rather than its appearance, he suggests that '[c]orrecting manuscripts nurtures intelligent responses to literary works and, in a knot that cannot be untied, is also nurtured by these responses' (Wakelin 2014 p 8). In exercising intelligence, scribes 'contribute to the long history of critical attention to English literature' (p 4). Combining both the visual aspects and content, Stephen Nichols presents an intriguing possibility: that reading a text and interpreting its visual signs are a 'dual literacy': they 'double the potential for that rupture between perception and consciousness [...] and thus offer a dual route of penetration to the underside of consciousness' (Nichols 1990 p 8). There was certainly an experience of that as I read the Paris text in the manuscript reading room at the Bibliothèque Nationale. The text of this manuscript has little adornment (which is why it is popular with scholars seeking as 'pure' a version as possible) but even this copyist had picked out some passages in red (not just the rubrics) and I could not but be influenced by that, finding myself reading again the text in red to see what, for the scribe, might have been special about it and what additional meaning might be made from it. Meanwhile the deteriorating handwriting of the Sloane scribe, from careful lettering at the outset to little more than a scribble by the end, had a different effect, as I imagined her working perhaps under pressure of time, perhaps becoming bored by some of the theological ruminations, or just longing to finish her task, finding in turn my own interpretation of the text was again affected by the way the text was presented.

This historical approach to manuscript culture of course opens up immense possibilities for interpretation and understanding of periods in which the manuscripts were written: the ideas that generated the copies and the ways in which the copies were treated. As Bourgain (2015) suggests, the number of surviving copies is one way of measuring not only an author's renown but also the intellectual and cultural habits of the time. The story of the Julian manuscripts itself tells a fascinating tale, as Jennifer Summit describes in her essay 'From Anchorhold to Closet' (Summit 2009). Summit argues that we should treat Julian to a seventeenth century view, when the extant manuscripts appeared. Julian should be seen as an important author of the early modern period because that is when she was reproduced and, in particular, sent to the nuns in exile at Cambrai and printed for a Catholic noblewoman. Valid as this proposal is, it should not preclude the scholar from mining the text itself for wisdom. She has, however, to recognise that historical comments on the content are, in the case of the Julian texts, speculative at best.

The modern concern to produce a critical edition is, by the foregoing observations, put in its own historical place, and any anxiety to find some original core of writing of the Julian texts, which as such perhaps never existed, is allayed. These observations also demonstrate a porosity between manuscript and reader or copier which supports the argument I go on to make in relation to the Julian texts.

Concluding summary and methodological decisions

The foregoing arguments draw the reader into analysis of manuscripts as they present themselves and removes the requirement to look behind what is presented for some shadowy author who probably did not exist in the way the modern author exists. For my purposes, it clears the ground made muddy and unstable by the lateness of the manuscripts and their minor but numerous internal disagreements. I cannot turn to the manuscripts that we have in order to learn about their historical author(s), but neither need I look only at the anatomy of the manuscripts. As the medievalist is released from the burden of seeking an author and divesting the manuscript of its 'additions' as she

studies it, so I am released from the burden of trying to work out whether the historical Julian really ‘wrote’ what I am reading. I can concentrate on the content of the text as it is presented. I recognise Barrett’s argument against concocting the historical Julian’s theology on shaky manuscript evidence, and I recognise the value of treating manuscripts as artifacts with their own histories rather than as pointers to what their original author(s) intended. My hermeneutical approach will be consistent with these scholars’ concerns in not making any claim at all about the ‘original’ or historical Julian, but only about the Julian to be found in the text. The person of Julian is important to my analysis, but in considering who she is from the internal evidence, I do so in order to find the Julian of the text only. The Julian to whom I refer, then, is to be understood as the Julian of the text, not the Julian of history. I will refer, from time to time, to medieval scholars cited by other commentators as possible influences on her, but only in order to emphasise a distinctive and contrasting feature of the Julian texts that is related to my argument. The medieval references are not load-bearing.

The Colledge and Walsh edition, using Paris as its base text, shows readings from both Sloane manuscripts, Westminster, Cressy and Upholland, where these differ from Paris, as footnotes, so comparisons may be readily made. Baker’s text uses the Paris manuscript but without alternate readings. Glasscoe uses Sloane, again without alternate readings. Windeatt uses Sloane, with commentary including discussion of alternate readings as endnotes. The text of Watson and Jenkins is hybrid. Paris is their base text, and their editorial decisions to weave in alternate readings from Westminster and Sloane are indicated, but the detail of what the editors have done is given in endnotes, making scholarly reading clumsy, though their inclusion of the Short Text underneath the Long Text is helpful for comparison and contrast. While I have referred to Glasscoe, Watson and Jenkins, and Windeatt, I quote from Colledge and Walsh as my base text, with its easy reference to other versions. Because of that easy reference, I have compared and contrasted Sloane alternative readings, and where relevant the Westminster, Cressy and Upholland ones, but I have not found they change the force of my interpretation, so for the most part I have not included the alternate

readings as I quote. It would be pedantry for its own sake, and would only irritate the reader, as I quote extensively and continually from the text in order to analyse it. Most of my study is of LT, but I have included readings from ST which are not in LT, without drawing conclusions that depend upon certainty about their chronological order, which we cannot know. I indicate in every case whether the quotation is from LT or ST. When referring to the texts in general, I call them the Julian texts.

By these means I have cleared the ground of manuscript and historical problems in preparation for the hermeneutical approach I will develop in the next chapter, and the detailed study of the text itself in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER THREE

Developing a Post-Ricoeurian Hermeneutical Approach

Introduction

In Chapter One I characterised the ecological challenge as the need for humanity to be ‘saved’ from its *Gestell* subjectivity, of which the damage humanity is doing to the planet is a symptom, by means of a restored porosity. *Gestell* is a Heideggerian concept for ‘enframed’ perception which is the ‘essence of technology’ (Heidegger 1949/1977). In this perception, everything, not just nature but also humanity, is in ‘standing reserve’, being used or waiting to be used, and has no intrinsic but only utilitarian value. This Heideggerian diagnosis of the ecological challenge is accurate, but, I argued, his solution of a phenomenological return to (transcendent) Being does not spring the trap of enslavement to *Gestell*. Heidegger’s call on the arts’ poetic revealing for help is the right direction to turn, but his phenomenology needs to be critiqued by Ricoeur’s hermeneutical approach; this understands that texts have the power to ‘wound’ the self, undermining its buffered subjectivity. I proposed that the Julian texts, read with the help of Ricoeur, could be of assistance because they have potential to transform the subjectivity of their reader and make it porous, not least because Julian in the text is herself transformed and made porous by her revelations. In Chapter Two I identified the historical and manuscript challenges that make it impossible to know for certain that the Julian of the sixteenth and seventeenth century manuscripts is the Julian of fourteenth and fifteenth century history.

These introductory arguments prepared the ground for the task of this chapter: to develop a hermeneutical approach that will enable a reading of the Julian texts that foregrounds their transformational characteristic. Paul Ricoeur will be my initial and foundational guide. His hermeneutics acknowledge and address the fallibility of the way the self ‘reads’ the world: precisely the issue at stake in the ecological crisis. A hermeneutic that assumed an infallible, transcendent reading self would not save us from our *Gestell* subjectivity, because it would not critique the self that is in bondage to *Gestell*. In addition to critiquing the reading self, Ricoeur critiques the text.

He argues for its independence from its author and original setting, which is an important factor for studying the Julian texts whose author cannot be identified. Ricoeur also describes the way in which poetic texts in particular summon and change the reading self. This description, I will argue, applies to the Julian texts whose potential ‘poetic’ effect on their reader is to undermine his *Gestell* subjectivity. Identifying these important Ricoeurian foundations forms Part One of this chapter.

Ricoeur brings us to the point of understanding that our fallible selves are ‘summoned’ to and changed by the text, but I do not stop there. I propose a ‘post-Ricoeurian’ hermeneutical approach that is dependent upon Ricoeur’s insights but extensively develops the notion of the reader’s and the text’s porosity, in order to foreground as clearly as possible this transformational aspect of the Julian texts.

First, in Part Two, I argue that the encounter between reader and text, out of which meaning emerges, is ‘performative’. This is a development of what Ricoeur calls the ‘long journey’ of the *ipse* self as it encounters and is transformed by the text. The concept of a performative engagement with the text explains how the meaning of a text emerges *at the time* of reading, which Davies calls ‘intimate communication’ (Davies 2017 pp 15, 22), by virtue of the transformational power of this kind of text and the absorbed participation of the reader as she reads. I turn to some philosophers and theologians to support this move, and importantly also to an interdisciplinary group of philosophers and scientists called the ‘enactivists’, whose contribution to my thesis I will justify.

Next, in Part Three, in a move that goes to the heart of my thesis, I argue that reading the text is made possible by and also causes ‘porosity’ of both the reading self and the text being read. This is a development of Ricoeur’s account of the fallible, summoned, reading self, which is in contrast to Heidegger’s *Gestell* self and undermines even his phenomenological Being. The reader’s porosity is already evident as she is summoned to, not commanding of, the text, and the encounter with the text itself is transformative as the subjectivity of both the reader and the text are made porous by it.

Finally, I show how the porosity of the reader's performative encounter with the text takes place within a world or 'niche' and is also creative of new niches: the new world that will be different from the adversarial world the *Gestell* subject saw. The 'niche constructing' effect of reading is a development of Ricoeur's account of the 'world' of the encounter. I draw on insights into 'niche construction' from interdisciplinary studies inspired by evolutionary theory. I will justify this move. This study of 'niche construction' forms Part Four of the chapter.

The chapter will conclude by drawing together the three approaches, proposing a post-Ricoeurian hermeneutical approach which emphasises the porosity of the reading encounter, its performative character, and its niche constructing effect. In subsequent chapters a detailed reading of the Julian texts will be undertaken using this approach, out of which will emerge a proposed transformed subjectivity that is porous, not *Gestell*, that will then conceive a very different world and operate in it accordingly.

Part I) Ricoeurian Foundations

Introductory

Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutical approach is essential to my thesis because he critiques the reading self, whose *Gestell* subjectivity, I have argued, has to be transformed and restored into porosity; and he also critiques the text, which must be 'poetic' in order to spring the trap of enslavement to *Gestell*, and needs to have autonomy or independence if I am to use the Julian texts, whose author(s) cannot be conclusively identified. Ricoeur stands in a line of hermeneuts who are influenced by Husserl's phenomenology, whose method recognised that an interpreting community must over and over again look at phenomena (Jeanrond 1991 p 59). But as we saw in the study of Heidegger's flawed proposals for escape from *Gestell*, phenomenology does not critique the interpreting self itself. The hermeneutics of Ricoeur's predecessor Hans-Georg Gadamer did, as Gadamer understood the task of hermeneutics to be to promote human understanding by alignment or fusion of the 'horizons' of the reader with those of the text: we bring our own presuppositions to

the text and can let them be changed by it (Gadamer 1967/1976). Ricoeur incorporated Gadamer's insights but added his own, seeing also that different texts have different effects. In this section I prepare the foundations of my post-Ricoeurian hermeneutical approach by describing and drawing upon Ricoeur's arguments i) for the independence of the text; ii) that the hermeneut always stands *in medias res* as one among many interpreters without the final word; iii) about the effect of poetic texts; and iv) that the reading self is summoned and changed by the poetic text.

i) The independence of the text

In the previous chapter I acknowledged that the manuscript and historical challenges that attend upon the Short and Long Texts mean that I cannot assume the context of a fourteenth-fifteenth century anchoress in Norwich for my material. This absence of context is recognised in hermeneutical theory to be a danger, because it removes any historical reference-point to guard the hermeneut from straying into fanciful waters (eg Quash 2013 p 147, quoting Robert Morgan). Ricoeur's argument for the autonomy or independence of the text addresses this difficulty. Ricoeur develops his argument in 'Toward a Hermeneutic of the Idea of Revelation' (Ricoeur 1977) where he suggests that the text, once written, becomes independent of its author, the situation of its being written, and its first audience: '[Writing] produces a form of discourse that is immediately autonomous with regard to its author's intention' (Ricoeur 1977 p 22). It is not fixed by the author; rather, its issue, what it is about, 'can burst the world of the author' (p 22) and, by implication, that of the reader. Biblical texts are given a spurious and fixed authority of revelation, Ricoeur suggests, by conflating the law of praying with the law of believing; by a historical community taking upon itself the final understanding of a faith; and by a magisterium imposing a body of doctrines. Ricoeur's analysis of the different biblical discourses — narrative, hymnic, prophetic, prescriptive and sapiential — shows how impossible it is to fix a meaning on these texts. In particular, he questions the notion of 'revelation' that asserts or understands that God spoke to the writers of the sacred texts in the same way as just one type of biblical narrative, prophecy, claims. Thus the

prophet speaks as God speaking through him, directly: God told me to say this, and I am saying this. The prescriptive writings of the law, however, are not couched in these direct, dictated terms, but begin with the minutiae of specific laws, move into the simpler summing up of the decalogue as a way of becoming holy, into the golden rule, written on the hearts of the faithful, as Ezekiel 36 declares. The psalms present a different kind of discourse again. By reference to such examples and the different ways in which they must be considered, Ricoeur shows how inappropriate a single interpretation is, and how the text must be available to be studied and considered and re-interpreted in order to reveal itself anew. The text must be allowed to speak into the present. The reader receives ‘the new being that is displayed’ (Ricoeur 1995 p 44).

Hence the reader or interpreter can approach the text afresh, without the burden of discovering the original intention of the author. The historical difficulties of linking the Julian whom we know from bequests of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries to the author of the extant sixteenth and seventeenth century manuscripts are, on this understanding, not a confounding issue. The Julian that is found in the text, however, refers to herself as the author, and Julian-as-author in the text is important to my thesis. The Julian of the text makes explicit that she does not want to be seen or known (eg LT pp 320.36f), but it is her way of receiving her revelations and communicating their self-transforming power to her readers that is the basis of my argument for her contribution to addressing the ecological challenge. This will become evident repeatedly as I study the text. And although Ricoeur has loosened the ties of the text’s historical setting, and therefore the hermeneut from the burden of having to adopt the mantle of the historian, the fourteenth century in which the Julian of the Short and Long Texts says, *in the text*, that she had her revelations (LT p 285.2ff),⁴¹ is significant. The Julian of the text writes not in a chronological vacuum but in a medieval paradigm that is not *Gestell*, as Taylor shows (2007).

My hermeneutical approach, then, adopts the Ricoeurian argument that the Julian texts can be treated independently, which frees me to take every word of them seriously, and accept them on

⁴¹ ‘This reuelation was made to a symple creature vnlettyrde leving in deadly flesh, the yer of our lord a thousande and three hundered and lxxiij, the xiiij daie of May’ (LT p 285.2ff).

their own terms, without having to try to make sense of them by connecting them to a historical author. However, the person of Julian who emerges in the text will turn out to be critical for my post-Ricoeurian reading, as she shows herself to be an example of a porous, non-*Gestell* self, whose way of writing is capable of transforming the *Gestell* self of the reader by, in turn, restoring his porosity.

ii) *The hermeneut always stands 'in medias res'*

Ricoeur writes that the 'world of the text can burst the world of the author', which means the text is set free from its author. It also means that 'whoever receives the text' is also free: not bound by 'the finite horizon' of the text's original audience (Ricoeur 1977 p 22). Thus anyone can come to the text and make her own interpretation. She is, though, making it as one among many people and cultures. She can never be the final interpreter, giving the last word on a text. She is always *in medias res* (Ricoeur 1975 p 91). This emphasises that the text has already passed through many interpretative hands. It holds the stamp of its earliest author(s) and scribes, and carries the baggage of previous hermeneuts, who cast their shadows more or less strongly. So although I am free to make my own interpretation, I am also in a historical line, and join a community of interpreters, on some of whom I will draw as I read the Julian texts in subsequent chapters.

Ben Quash (2013), observing that every reader cannot help but bring his or her own world to the text from their own historical setting, helpfully suggests that a virtue is made of this. The reader can intentionally bring important and deep questions from his own time. In this way, the reader adds positively and creatively to the meanings a text can offer. Quash uses the example of Carpaccio's painting of Job to illustrate his point. Carpaccio's own situation made him rediscover and redefine the story of Job, including in his painting aspects of the story that are not emphasised in the biblical text from which he would have worked. We in turn, because of our situation, see things in Carpaccio's paintings he may not have consciously intended (Quash 2013 pp 142ff). My encounter with the Julian texts comes from my Quashian wish to ask a question from my own time

about our response to the ecological challenge, believing that her writing, which was clearly not for an audience worried about the state of the planet, will nevertheless address the underlying cause of *Gestell* subjectivity. In so doing, aspects and characteristics of the text will become evident that will have hitherto remained hidden.

iii) The effect of the poetic text

The biblical revelation narrative, writes Ricoeur, is 'generative poetics': its language generates a change in the subject (Ricoeur 1977 p 15). There are resonances here with Heidegger's appeal to the arts, but Ricoeur goes much further in his claim about the 'poetic effect'. 'My deepest conviction is that poetic language alone restores to us that participation-in or belonging-to⁴² an order of things which precedes our capacity to oppose ourselves to things taken as objects opposed to a subject' (1977 p 24). Poetry saves us from turning things into the Heideggerian objective 'standing reserve', but it does more than merely return us to 'the place or time of the arising of the technological point of view' (Heidegger 1949/1977 p 17). The 'order of things' which precedes our objectifying is participative: the originary state is one of 'belonging-to'. 'Being' is relational, or in Charles Taylor's terms, porous, and poetry, according to Ricoeur, has the power to restore it.

Poetic texts, unlike scientific texts, do not demonstrate truth through adequation, equivalence, proof or rational argument, but by manifesting it, by being it through imitation of real life. Biblical texts are thus poetic texts, argues Ricoeur: they do not seek to prove God by argument; rather, God is that to which the hymnic, sapiential, narrative, prescriptive and supplicative texts refer, so the meaning of God circulates amongst these different references, made manifest by them but never fully, and often only as that which remains hidden.⁴³ The poetic language creates

⁴² A phrase borrowed from Gadamer (1975).

⁴³ Rowan Williams, drawing on the work of Cornelius Ernst (1979) writes of the 'disruptive' effect of the deceptively familiar ways in which 'God' is used in the Bible, in which 'he' acts and thinks in ways that humans do too. These familiar ways are 'layered' over language that is, by virtue of this odd proximity, disrupted. 'God' becomes a metaphor. 'God' plays away from home in alien territory. God is not philosophical protocols but a 'disconcerting bundle of activities: exodus, covenant, forgiveness and renewal' (Williams 2014 pp 6ff).

new possibilities, even worlds. The reader open to the text will be exposed to its poetry and changed by it, rather than being exposed to an argument and working out whether to agree with it or not. In his later writings, Ricoeur describes the reading self experiencing a ‘paroxysmic homology’ (1995 p 263) in encountering poetic texts which call for a response. The ‘poetic’ texts he refers to here are the calls to the prophets in the Hebrew scriptures. The text is calling the reader to something far beyond anything the self believes it can reach (p 265). The reader is radically displaced from his familiar world, which ‘explodes’ (p 61) his autonomy. Then there is a tussle between the autonomous conscience which has to work things out for itself, and cannot see how to address the challenge, and the obedience of faith, in this case faith in God, called to a seemingly impossible task. The obedience is not, however, blind heteronomy, says Ricoeur. It is a heartfelt response to the manifestation of truth through the poetic form. This is a vulnerable place for the reader to be, but if the reader is bound in *Gestell* then it is also a means of salvation, albeit not in the phenomenological way that Heidegger imagined. The reader must let go of his seemingly transcendent subjectivity and allow the poetry to have its effect, which is to restore him to his originary relational state that precedes the subject-object divide.

Poetic texts thus have an effect rather than make an argument, and their effect is to undo the objective perspective of the reading self. The category works, I am suggesting, for the Julian texts because in the same way as the Julian of the text is changed by the revelations she ‘read’, so, I will seek to show, her text has the ‘poetic’ potential to change her reader, even to call her reader into an entirely new way of being. The claim being made here is not empirical, although it is notable how many and varied audiences have found the Julian texts compelling in the years since her twentieth century rediscovery (Watson and Jenkins 2006 pp 18ff). To include the Julian texts in Ricoeur’s category of poetic language that has the power to restore ‘belonging-to’ in the reader is simply to invite such a reading. Its proof is in the lived experience of the reading (hopefully throughout Chapters Four to Six of this thesis); its transformative power cannot be proved by at-a-distance, *Gestell*-like research.

iv) *The reading self is summoned and changed*

Ricoeur argues that the reading self is restored by the poetic text to her 'originary' state of 'belonging-to'. The *cogito* self is undermined by this process. Ricoeur's critique of the self began in his 'Phenomenology and Hermeneutics' (1975), where he opposes the idealism if not the method of phenomenology, since for Husserlian ideology the subject is transcendent, and, as we saw in Chapter One, for Heidegger also, hence the limits on his method of salvation from *Gestell* subjectivity. Werner Jeanrond brings Heidegger and Ricoeur into dialogue: noting Terry Eagleton's criticism of Heidegger for failing to historicise Edmund Husserl's 'static, eternal truths', having rather set up his own 'eternal truth' (p 41), that of *Dasein* (Being) itself (Heidegger 1927/1962), Jeanrond contrasts Ricoeur's hermeneutics (Eagleton does not), which are radically suspicious of the self and must always involve a process of self-reflection (Jeanrond 1991 pp 109ff). Phenomenology critiqued by hermeneutics ensures the apparently transcendent self is undermined. As Merold Westphal puts it, the turn to hermeneutics meant that 'finitude' (the creatureliness of the reader) and 'suspicion' (the fallibility of the reader) are able to be acknowledged as the material change effected upon the reader by a text (Westphal 2009 p 273).

The turn in phenomenology to hermeneutics began with Gadamer, for whom the hermeneutical experience was one of 'lifting out of the alien something that changes our experience of the world' (Gadamer 1966/1976 p 15). The subject is not found prior to the text, as one who knows and makes use of the text as a *Gestell* self, but by means of it. The poetic text 'completes' the subjectivity of the reader (Ricoeur 1975 p 94). Ricoeur distinguishes, in 'Narrative Identity' (1991), between the *idem* self which is recognisably the same over time, and the *ipse* self which changes over time, having argued that the answer to the question 'who am I?' must take the long route through 'the vast laboratory of thought experiments available to him in cultural stories and symbols' (Ricoeur 1990 p 148). The Ricoeurian reading subject, then, is the end of the hermeneutical endeavour, not the beginning of it. She is not a *cogito*, buffered, or *Gestell* self; she

is not the Husserlian idealist subject. She is *ipse*, or in Taylor's terms, porous, changing all the time in the narrative of her own journey through her encounters with the text. The Ricoeurian reader is a disciple of the text, 'summoned' and open to being changed by the text (Ricoeur 1995 pp 262ff). She appropriates the thing of the text by disappropriating herself, 'in order to let the thing of the text be. Then I exchange the *me*, *master* of myself, for the *self*, *disciple* of the text' (1975 p 95, author's italics). This summoning is thus asymmetric: the 'call' of the text is to a greater subjectivity. Ricoeur writes of its effect as a 'paroxysmic homology' in which the ego is radically decentred (1995 p 265). This Ricoeurian feature is critical for my reading of the Julian texts because it will foreground their suggested capacity to transform the subjectivity of their reader: precisely the need that is at the heart of the ecological challenge.

Concluding summary

Ricoeur has laid important foundations for my hermeneutical approach. Through him I have established the independence of the Julian texts so that I can take every word of them seriously, as I have received them, without worrying about what the original author meant by them or knowing the detail (or indeed anything, conclusively, at all) about the *sitz im leben* of the original text and its audience. I have placed myself *in medias res*, as one interpreter among many. This allows me to receive previous interpretations and consciously bring my own deeply felt question about the twenty-first century ecological challenge to the Julian texts, without the burden of having to have the last word on them. I have established the concept of the poetic text which has the power to effect a change on the reader, calling her out of her known world, arguing that the Julian texts should take their place in this category. And finally I have identified the Ricoeurian insight that the reading self has to become a disciple of the text, not its master. She has to be summoned by an asymmetric call that opens her to change. Her *ipse* self is the result of her long journey into encounter with the text.

I have shown how Ricoeur, in his critique of the self and the text, can be seen as offering the beginning of a response to the Heideggerian enslavement to *Gestell*. The Ricoeurian approach can be developed much further, however, in ways that will release the great potential in the Julian texts to contribute to our ‘salvation’ by making us porous again. In the next three parts of the chapter I will articulate a triadic post-Ricoeurian hermeneutical approach that rests in each case on Ricoeurian foundations and builds upon them, showing how they apply to the Julian texts.

Part II) Developing Ricoeur: reading is performative

Introductory: Ricoeurian foundation

Ricoeur’s exposition of the *ipse* self on its long journey of encounter with the text, with no ‘short cuts’ (1990 p 48), implies that the experience of encounter is ‘performative’ because the reader actively participates in it: she embarks upon a journey. In the text, Julian is called into performative interaction with the Christ whom she encounters in her revelations. She is a wholly involved participant. Her text, emerging from her encounters as a continuing expression of them, in turn calls the reader into performative and interactive response. Julian dissolves her own and her readers’ *Gestell* distance by placing herself among us, her ‘evyn cristen’, so that we encounter as she does, and are changed by the encounter. She teaches by example that, like her, we are not transcendent selves interpreting a text from a distance. This approach means that ‘reading’ the texts involves active participation by the reading subject: a performative interaction with the text, not a critique of it. Julian wants her readers to understand and learn from what has happened to her:

Alle that I say of me I mene in person of alle my evyn cristen, for I am lernyd in the gostely shewyng of our lord god that he meneth so. And therfore I pray yow alle for gods sake, and counceyle yow for yowre awne profyght, that ye leue the beholdyng of a wrech that it was schewde to, and myghtely, wysely and mekely behold in god, that of his curteyse loue and endlesse goodnesse woldd shew it generally in comfort

of vs alle. For it is goddes wylle that ye *take it* with a grete ioy and lykyng, as Jhesu hath shewde it *to yow* (LT pp 319.33ff, my italics).

Julian calls her writing of the text a performative act to be continued in its reception by her readers:

This boke is begonne by goddys gyfte and his grace, but it is nott yett *performyd*, as to my syght [...] for [god] wyll haue [his meaning] knowyn more than it is (LT pp 731.3ff, my italics).

My hermeneutical approach seeks to do justice to this call by developing Ricoeur's account of the reader who is 'on a journey' into the notion of 'performative participation': the understanding that meaning is made by the performative engagement of the reader *at the time* of the encounter, not worked out afterwards (or assumed beforehand). I build on Ricoeur's foundations with material from i) theology and philosophy; and ii) enactivist research, the turn to which I justify, in a) performative encounter and b) conversation and reading.

i) 'Performative' theology and philosophy

A number of philosophers and theologians help to define this sense of real-time 'performance'. For example, Julia Kristeva writes: 'poetic language cannot be understood unless it is being *carried out*' (Kristeva 1984 p 103, my italics). Denys Turner likewise writes that music's meaning is discovered as it is *performed* (Turner 2004 p 115). On these accounts the reader or listener may not remain passive if meaning is to be found. The reader must reach behind the 'phenotext' to the 'genotext'⁴⁴ and in that participative interaction, she enters into the process of production. Through music, Turner suggests, we experience emotion that is not ours, nor someone else's: it transcends subject and object, and we are performatively engaged with the meaning that is made. 'Music is, as it were, the body in the condition of ecstasy' (Turner 2004 p 115). He explicitly aligns this performative

⁴⁴ These are helpful categories offered by Julia Kristeva. The 'genotext' embodies the hidden drives, language's 'underlying foundation' (Kristeva 1984 p 87), a space where the subject is not yet, but will be, generated. The 'phenotext' is what we see, making the hidden content conceptually explicit in the transfer of ideas, obeying rules of grammar and pronunciation.

understanding with medieval '*excessus*' (p 115), a term Oliver Davies uses for Julian's revelations (Davies 1992).

Paul Janz's account of revelation could be characterised as performative. Revelation is not a conceptual communication, he writes, but a gift which has reality only when it is '*enacted* in life, made real in life' (Janz 2009 p 179, my italics). The Resurrection of Christ, as understood by Alain Badiou, is also a demonstration of performative meaning-making. The 'event' of the Resurrection calls the self into a faithful response; the Resurrection's meaning or revelation *is* the active, participative, faithful response: there is no interpretative gap between the event of the Resurrection and the Christian's belief in it (Badiou 2003 pp 77f). Stanislas Breton writes of the Church as a community which expresses itself and finds its reality in its performative participation in Christ: dying with, suffering with, living in, etc. The actions 'recuperate the fervour of an origin (Christ) to which they are closely related' (Breton 2011 p 126).

The material reality of performative interaction is attested to by feminist theologians in particular. The theological anthropology of Shawn Copeland foregrounds the materiality of the divine revelation, arguing that the (by implication performative, interactive) *body* is the site for it (Copeland 2010 p 2). Elizabeth Johnson places the feminine Holy Spirit as the performative animator that (quoting Jay G. Williams) 'is God in the world, moving, stirring up, revealing, interceding' (Johnson 1992 p 85), and she interprets the Incarnation as the creation of a world in which God can communicate, as the 'Whither' of our self-transcendence, 'the divine self to the other who is not divine' (Johnson 2007 pp 35, 40, quoting Karl Rahner). These theologians convey the present aliveness and interactive engagement of encounter with God: the 'not divine' must participate in the performance of communication or revelation for it to happen.

ii) Turning to the enactivists

Although these performative theologians and philosophers (if I may be permitted to call them that) articulate the active engagement of the subject that is necessary for encounter to make meaning, I

need to make the definition of ‘performance’ work harder if I am to do justice to the effect the Julian texts can have. The Julian texts, I propose, have a visceral, material effect that can call their reader into a performative response. This participative act makes meaning that transforms the reader’s subjectivity; this in turn changes the way he sees and lives, and this addresses the ecological crisis. It is Julian’s method that will help our twenty-first century challenge. In her text, Julian does not step away from and critique her revelations and their effect on her from a distance. She actively relives them in her years of reflection and in her writing, and this active Julian-consciousness, which is present for the reader as he encounters the texts, is what gives them their power to summon him to a performative response today. But if the meaning I seek to make of the Julian texts is to effect a change in our subjectivity, it has to find a way of retaining or rekindling the active Julian-consciousness as *I* write. To retain this ‘in-the-moment’ aliveness of encounter which is the remarkable and distinguishing feature of the Julian texts, I turn to the enactivists, an interdisciplinary⁴⁵ group of scholars of social cognition whose work seeks to capture without killing the embodied and embedded nature of human interaction. I draw on this material to put the definition of ‘performative’ encounter to work. I am supported in this move by Davies who sees in Julian’s text the capacity to communicate to a reader today what it is to be a created being in a created world, through the reader’s necessarily ‘fully open and active’ consciousness (Davies 2017 p 26).

The irony of turning to scientific research in order to ‘make real’ my interpretation of Julian is not lost on me. For Heidegger, all scientific research is *Gestell* because it separates subject and object in order to investigate ‘object’ and in so doing loses the truth of the observed object. However, the enactivists’ science, emerging in the twenty-first century, is precisely not *Gestell*: in it one can detect a struggle to be free from *Gestell* seeing, as the enactivists try to embed their research methods in experience, not at a distance from it. Their inspiration comes from the

⁴⁵ Psychology, psychiatry, philosophy, sociology, neuroscience. Some of their work is gathered into one volume entitled *Towards an Embodied Science of Intersubjectivity: widening the scope of social understanding research* (Di Paolo and De Jaegher 2015), which is the source of much of my enactivist material.

phenomenology of Husserl, and the philosophies of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty.⁴⁶ In contrast to the *Gestell* science which brings nature into a controlled and false environment in order to turn it into something useful (Blitz 2014 p 48), these researchers, wanting to understand social cognition, recognise that they *cannot* do it from a third person perspective:

Our social lives are populated by different kinds of cognitive and affective phenomena that are related to but not exhausted by the question of how we figure out other minds. These phenomena include acting and perceiving together, verbal and non-verbal engagement, experiences of (dis-)connection, management of relations in a group, joint meaningmaking, intimacy, trust, conflict, negotiation, asymmetric relations, material mediation of social interaction, collective action, contextual engagement with socio-cultural norms, structures and roles, etc. These phenomena are often characterized by a strong participation by the cognitive agent *in contrast with the spectatorial stance* typical of social cognition research. We use the broader notion of embodied intersubjectivity to refer to this wider set of phenomena (Di Paolo and De Jaegher 2015 p 3, my italics).

The Julian of the text experiences powerful subjectivity-changing revelations whose meaning emerges as she participates in them *and* as she writes about them. In turn her reader can experience a changed subjectivity if he enters into performative, interactive encounter with the text, not as a ‘spectator’ but as a participant. These are real-time, material acts of meaning-making, and the enactivists’ research helps to make sense of them. I consider their insights a) into performative encounter in general and b) in the context of conversation.

a) Enactive insights in performative encounter

One of the enactivists, Czech philosopher Alice Koubova, argues that our hidden depth, and that of others, is ‘a performative aspect of our existence’ (Koubova 2015 p 62), using an experiment to

⁴⁶ Explicitly acknowledged by, eg, Gallagher 2015 pp 406f; Koubova 2015 pp 59ff; Laroche, Berardi, and Brangier 2015 p 40.

explain what she means. The research is, I suggest, a material demonstration of the Julian approach of transformative, performative encounter, because it illustrates how hidden depth, like Kristeva's genotext and, I am suggesting, Julian's method, can only be accessed and understood performatively. The experiment was inspired, as is much of the enactivists' thinking, by Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who had observed that we are invisible to each other corporeally because, paradoxically, our bodies are non-transparent. Our perception stops at the outer layer where material 'thickness' impedes further exploration of what lies beneath (Merleau-Ponty 1964 pp 166f). We are, further, invisible to each other cognitively as our presentation of, say, ideas, hides what lies behind them (Merleau-Ponty 1968 p 63). There is a vast mysterious store behind what we show each other and are aware of ourselves. Finding this hidden depth cannot happen theoretically but only through engaged participative performance. The experiment illustrated how our 'invisible store' is revealed by participative performance and not by cognitive reasoning. The experiment also illustrated that this hidden store is what makes further, more creative and unexpected performance possible. These insights will be used extensively to help understand the Julian texts as I study them in the following chapters. I give a detailed account of the experiment, therefore, showing how the points it illuminates compare with the words of the Julian texts.

The experiment required, in turn, each one of a group of students to enter a space with an audience made up of the other students, whom he was not to contact visually or physically. He himself was given nothing to do. He would remain in the space for up to five minutes. The audience was to support the actor with 'favourable attention' (Koubova 2015 p 65). The experiment took place over a year, with the students returning to the same space repeatedly. In the final part of the study, they entered the space in pairs.

The initial experience was terrifying as the students stood alone in the space with all 'stabilised normative systems of communication' removed (p 65). The first point to be illuminated by the experiment is that performative engagement is a step into the unknown, away from *Gestell* subjectivity, an act of bravery based on trust. The 'act of trust' is articulated well by Rowan

Williams (2000)⁴⁷ and the self so acting is Ricoeurianly ‘summoned’. Julian was summoned to participate in the Passion of Christ in a comparable act of brave trust. Having fallen ill and believing she is at the point of death, she writes:

Then cam sodenly to my mynd that I should desyer [...] that my bodie might be fulfilled with mynd and feeling of his blessed Passion [...] for I would that his paynes were my paynes [...] With him I desyred to suffer, liuying in my deadly bodie (LT pp 292.43ff).

Julian’s step into the unknown is a step away from her ordinary world, which is bound by her own set of subjective certainties, most of all those determined by ‘holy chyrch’, to be explored in Chapter Four.

As the experiment continued, the students began to find inner resources, such as stability: ‘I felt like a rock or statue, full of meaning suddenly’ (Koubova 2015 p 65); and materiality: ‘I realised I was there as a body’ (p 65). The second point to be illuminated is that ‘inner resource’ emerges materially, in performance, *after* the summoned self has responded as an act of trust. This cannot be anticipated and therefore it cannot be understood theoretically. Following immediately on from Julian’s step into the unknown, her first revelation commences:

And in this sodenly I saw the reed bloud rynnyng downe from vnder the garlande, hote and freyshely, plentuously and liuely [...] Right so, both god and man, the same that suffered for me, I conceived truly and mightly that it was him selfe that shewed it me without anie meane (LT p 294.3ff).

The response to Julian’s step into the unknown is a direct, unmediated showing to her of the dying Christ, who had hitherto been ‘hidden’ in her imagination and thoughts, not seen clearly and materially as he was now.

⁴⁷ ‘If I know that no human dependence can serve here, only two options remain: that constantly fearful and cautious negotiation of my identity, building up what is constructive in my relation to my environment, and vigilantly looking out for the danger represented by the ‘cultural’ power of others; or an act of trust in my right or capacity to act and give’ (Williams 2000 p 72).

The students each began to explore creative play, becoming, for example, a flower or a scary crying voice. The third point thus to be illustrated is that the ‘inner resource’ is creatively new and unexpected. When Julian’s request to experience the pains of Christ’s Passion is materially answered in the eighth revelation, she suffers so much she regrets ever having asked for them:

I felte no peyne, but for Cristes paynes; than thought me I knew fulle lytylle what payne it was that I askyd, and as a wrech I repentyd me, thyngkyng if I had wyste what it had be, loth me had been to haue preyde it (LT p 364.53ff).

The desire for the pains of the Passion conceived in her youth (LT pp 285.4ff) could not prepare Julian for the actual pain, now performatively experienced.

Over time, as they repeatedly returned to the performance space, the students started to find a hidden, back-stage self: one student described over and over again coming to a point of finding and stopping at a secret shameful self she had always hidden, and deciding in one session finally to be that hidden self. She curled up on the stage like a fetus, but then quite quickly became bored, stood up and ‘was born’ (Koubova 2015 p 66). The self she had hidden became another actor on the stage, increasing her performative possibilities. The fourth point is that the inner self, which ordinarily remains deeply hidden, took time to be born and that required the constancy of the student in returning to the performance. But when she was finally born, she unfussedly became part of the performance: far from being exposed for the fraud she thought this secret self truly was, the student found her to be a further source of creativity. Julian’s performative engagement with her revelations is powerfully enacted by her through her eyes, which are fastened on the crucifix held before them by her curate. The revelations take place on the crucifix and her constancy of gaze is critical to their meaning. So when a voice tempts her to look away and up to heaven rather than at the Cross which is the source of such great pain, which she herself is experiencing, she refuses:

Here me behovyd to loke vppe or elles to answe. I answeyrd inwardly with alle the myght of my soule, and sayd: Nay I may nott, for thou art my heven. Thys I

seyde for I wolde nott; for I had levyr a bene in that payne tylle domys day than haue come to hevyn other wyse than by hym (LT pp 370.9ff).

Julian's constancy is rewarded by a deeper understanding of the nature of the Passion, when she is shown the same painful, bloody, dying Christ on the Cross 'in blessydfulle chere' (LT p 379.7) as the 'hidden depths' of the pain of Christ are revealed to be love and joy. The eighth revelation, from which this example comes, will be explored in greater detail in Chapter Five.

Then the Koubova actors began to enjoy the experiment, following events rather than thinking about themselves. For example, one student found she was swaying slightly, and became aware that she was behaving as though balancing, so then she was balancing on a ship, and her fingers fluttered. These became a waving hand and she called to those to whom she was waving goodbye and 'goodbye, my hero' the others called from the dock. Then she realised she was in the middle of the ocean and had no one to wave to, so now her hand which was waving uselessly became a sea monster that tried to bite her, and she bit back, and so on. The audience reported her and others' performance as fully alive and unexpected. The fifth point is that no one, neither the performer nor the engaged and attentive audience, knew what was going to happen next in the performance. It was an entirely new act that arose from the participative encounter. 'Invisible excess' is brought into play when there is relaxed curiosity and playfulness, and the audience approves, describing a certain power that moves them. An example from Julian of this 'invisible excess' is the fourteenth revelation, which is an 'example' or parable of a lord and a servant, a most unexpected, controversial and personal response to her urgent call to understand sin (LT pp 513.2ff), explored in detail in Chapter Six.

The final stage of the year-long experiment involved placing a second person with the actor, so that there were now two people from the group on the stage. They reported a patient allowing of the other in a state of attentive playfulness, waiting to see what would happen, responding to slight moves but not worriedly. The sixth point is that at this final, relaxed and attentive point, the students are able to access and make sense of each others' hidden stores, performatively engaging

with them and also drawing performance out of them. After Julian has spent ‘xv yere after and mor’ in participative interaction with her revelations, reflecting on what she saw, returning again and again to their detail, she is able to make sense of the ‘hidden stores’ of God’s meaning:

What, woldest thou wytt thy lordes menyng in this thyng? Wytt it wele, loue was his menyng. Who shewyth it the? Loue. What shewid he the? Love. Wherefore shewyth he it the? For loue. Holde the therin, thou shalt wytt more in the same (LT pp 732.15ff).

The Koubova experiment thus illuminates key characteristics which will emerge in my study of the Julian texts: of trustful stepping into the unknown; of the consequent release of creativity; of the novel nature of what is created; of the performative power of hidden depths that emerge over time; of the unanticipable nature of the performance; and of attentive responsiveness to the other which produces new creative acts. These characteristics are communicated by this enactivist experiment truthfully in the Heideggerian sense, that is, not as *Gestell*, and justify my use of the enactivist approach in developing my post-Ricoeurian hermeneutic.

b) Performative encounter as enactive ‘conversation’

Julian’s performative engagement with her revelations means that they are not simply pageants passively observed. Her response to them, her interrogation of the God she meets in them, and her musings about them, are all active ingredients in what the revelations are, and in what the text we now read is. So much so, that at times it seems that the revelations are turned inside out, as Julian’s understanding of and writing about them are intermingled with what happened in them. Nicholas Watson notices this (Watson 1993), as does Barry Windeatt (Windeatt 2015 p xxv), who observes that Julian does not disentangle the revelation from her illumination and inspiration, and does not think she needs to: they are both revealed by the same Spirit (pp xlvf). A helpful way of understanding Julian’s performative engagement with her revelations, suggested by enactivism, is that she is in ‘conversation’ with them. One piece of research reflects on the ‘collective sense

making' that is conversation (Raczaszek-Leonardi, Debska, and Sochanowicz 2015). When each of two people speaking to each other is only trying to make himself understood, then the conversation is merely representative, and each speaker bears the burden of meaning-making. When the conversation is directed towards coordination, then each is participating in a 'joint project' (p 353), in which he is performatively engaged in creating something new with his conversation partner, a new meaning emerging from the interaction. Fred Cummins writes of the mutuality in sense-making that is conversation creating a 'new kind of subject pole' (Cummins 2015 p 335). These enactivists offer ways of understanding how Julian's encounters in her revelations, including the sense she makes of them as she muses over them, convey such creative freshness. For example, Julian's interactions over the place and teaching of 'holy chyrch', especially when it does not seem to concur with what she is being shown in her revelations, have the quality of a conversation that is seeking a new understanding. New meaning emerges with Julian's performative engagement in conversation with the revelations:

The hygher dome god shewed hym selfe in the same tyme, and therfore me behovyndedys to take it. And the lower dome was lernyd me before tyme in holy chyrche, and therfore I myght nott by no weye leue the lower dome (LT p 488.23ff).

Julian presses the point: how true in God's sight is the 'dome' of holy church? New and unexpected revelations about holy church and its teachings emerge out of the 'joint project' of her participative questioning, born of her strong desire to understand, which will be explored in Chapters Four and Six.

Another enactivist, Yanne Popova (2015), helps us to understand how the reader, in turn, engages performatively with the Julian texts as Julian has with her revelations, showing how fresh meaning emerges from this encounter, by viewing the narrator as a conversational partner, whom the reader constructs as he reads. This narrator is unique to the reader, argues Popova, and is psychologically real. Thus written language is invested with life by the reader. He creates a path as he reads, and the path is his own. He brings forth a reality through performative enaction. 'A

meaningful encounter with a story is thus a participatory act of performance’ (Popova 2015 p 325). The meaning of the text emerges moment by moment in the participative act, which becomes his own only when he enacts it. In the case of my reading of the Julian texts, the Julian who emerges from my performative engagement with her is strangely elusive: she refuses any title such as teacher or narrator and she does not want to be looked at: ‘leue the beholdyng of a wrech that it was schewde to’ (LT p 320.36f). This elusive quality only engages my interest more and thus my interactivity: I look more closely for her in the text and find that she is critical for my post-Ricoeurian reading, an example *par excellence* of the porous self willing to be transformed by her encounter. I explore Julian’s elusive subjectivity in Chapter Four.

Concluding summary

The first part of my triadic post-Ricoeurian hermeneutical approach is established as that the encounter between the reader and the text is ‘performative’. Helpful explanatory insights were identified from Kristeva and Turner on, respectively, the text as production and the meaning of music emerging in its performance. Janz’s account of revelation as enaction, Badiou’s account of the Resurrection as embodied in the subjectivity of the faithful and Breton’s account of the Church as the embodiment of participation in its origin, Christ, all added further insights, as did the materiality of the encounter with God through the Incarnation and the work of the Holy Spirit offered by Johnson and Copeland. The enactivists were turned to as a way of retaining the present aliveness of the reader’s encounter with Julian, their non-spectatorial, non-*Gestell* research methodology able to articulate the subjectivity-changing effect in real time of texts such as Julian’s. Koubova’s experiment brought to light the hidden creativity that emerges in encounter; and Cummins, Raczaszek-Leonardi and Popova all explained something of the live meaning-making of conversation and reading. With the support of theological insights and enactivist research, then, ‘performance’ takes its place in the post-Ricoeurian hermeneutical triad.

Part III) Developing Ricoeur: reading is porous

Introductory: Ricoeurian foundation

The second part of the post-Ricoeurian hermeneutical triad is concerned with the subjectivity of the reading self and how it is made porous by his encounter with the text. The restoration of porous subjectivity is of critical importance in my reading of the Julian texts because it reaches to the heart of the ecological challenge: that it is our subjectivity, bound to *Gestell*, that is the cause of the crisis of harm to the planet, and its restoration to porosity will therefore significantly contribute to addressing the crisis. On this account, my argument that Julian can help address the ecological challenge is dependent upon her ability to restore her reader's porosity. Ricoeur offers foundational insights: i) that the reading self is 'already a self in relation' (1995 p 262); ii) that the hermeneutical experience *is* 'belonging-to', which he defines as 'a relationship of inclusion which unites the allegedly autonomous subject and the allegedly adverse object' (1975 p 89); and iii) that the encounter thereby 'restores' the 'belonging-to' of the subject (1977 p 24) and, he will argue, that of the text. I will take each of these Ricoeurian categories in turn and develop them, as before, with insights from theology, philosophy and the enactivist approach, showing examples from the Julian texts. In so doing, the concept of 'porosity' will be more fully defined.

i) The self is a priori relational

Ricoeur writes that the reading self is 'already a self in relation' (1995 p 262). This *a priori* state could be characterised as a state of 'woundedness' in that it implies an openness to that which is outside of or other than the self. At the beginning of her account of her revelations, Julian introduces herself as one who asks to be wounded:

I harde a man telle of halye kyrke of the storye of saynte Cecylle, in the whilke schewynge I vndyrstode that sche hadde thre wonndys with a swerde in the nekke, with the whilke sche pynede to the dede. By the styrrynge of this I conseyvede a myghty desyre, prayande oure lorde god that he wolde grawnte me thre wonndys in

my lyfe tyme, that es to saye the wonnde of contricyoun, the wonnde of
compassyoun and the wonnde of wylfulle langgyng to god' (ST pp 204.46ff).

For Julian, the early wounds were a preparation for her revelations: readying her psychologically to receive and make sense of their powerful effect on her subjectivity. The preparedness of the self for encounter is articulated by Maurice Merleau-Ponty when he writes that perception is a 'perpetual parturition' that exists between the self and that which it perceives (Merleau-Ponty 1968 p 115). The predicative being is wounded as 'a sort of dehiscence opens my body in two ... things pass into us as well as we pass into the things' (p 123). For Julia Kristeva, reaching behind the phenotext to the genotext to 'produce' meaning calls for a decentring of the transcendental ego, 'cutting through it and opening it to a dialectic', as quoted by Graham Hughes (Hughes 2003 p 106). Alain Badiou also recognises the need for 'subjective weakness' if the truth is to continue to be deployed, because the truth 'traverses' the self (Badiou 2003 p 54).

Julian's wounds of desire 'dwellid contynually' (LT p 288.46), ensuring that her subjectivity retained its porousness against the day when her revelations took place, and also, we might suggest, 'summoning' the revelations into existence. When they do happen, Julian 'marvels' and 'wonders' at them and continues to do so in the years of reflection on them thereafter.⁴⁸ A connection between 'wound' and 'wonder' is made by Mary-Jane Rubenstein who proposes an etymological link (Rubenstein 2008 p 9).⁴⁹ My attention was drawn to the link by anthropologist Michael Scott, who notes that for the Arosi people whom he studied, the land was their source of strength, but it only made its strength available to them by means of their 'wonder' at it. As soon as the Arosi people

⁴⁸ Eg LT pp 296.17f; 510.6. A longer list of references is given in Chapter Four where I study Julian's woundedness and its connection with 'marvelling' in more detail.

⁴⁹ 'The word wonder derives from the Old English *wundor*, which some etymologists suggest might be cognate not only with the German *Wunder*, but also with *Wunde*: cut, gash, wound. While the OED does not recognise this derivation of wonder (appropriately, its origin is said to be 'unknown'), the OED does support a possible shared ancestry between wonder and wounding in the entry's 'obsolete' listings' (Rubenstein 2008 p 9).

lost their sense of wonder, they lost their strength (Scott 2014). On this account, it is wonder that wounds, while the wounds of porous subjectivity in turn keep the wonder alive.⁵⁰

In contrast to the *Gestell* habit of objectification, the enactivists' approach recognises that the reality of social interaction is that people are always already emotionally engaged with and hence porous to each other, so if we want to know about someone, we do not stand at a distance and watch him, at least not for long and not to any helpful end.⁵¹ We interact with him: we move towards him, ask him questions and watch his facial and other bodily movements as he responds. The enactivists draw extensively on empirical evidence from the 'second person' neuroscientific research of Leonard Schilbach and colleagues (2013) to demonstrate that we are first of all social selves.⁵² The research confounds the *Gestell* self, as it is designed to reflect the 'embodied and embedded' nature of human intersubjective interaction (Schilbach et al. 2013 p 395). Using fMRI scanning, Schilbach and colleagues measure what happens neurologically as subjects interact with each other. The research demonstrates the significance of 'joint attention', that is, doing things together, both for the enjoyment of the adult subjects and also, for younger subjects, as an important precursor of social cognitive abilities, long before they pass the 'false belief test' (p 404).⁵³ The brain activation in the case of 'looking together' is that which is associated with seeking to grasp the

⁵⁰ Scott worries that anthropology is committing 'wondercide' (2013 p 859) as its objectifying, *Gestell*-like approach kills amazement at what is being studied.

⁵¹ Arne Naess, founding father of the 'deep ecology' movement, gives the example of someone witnessing two people conducting x-rays, not knowing anything of the culture and civilisation in which the x-ray is taking place. One of the clinicians is left-handed, the other right-handed and so conducts the x-ray differently. Without engaging with the clinicians, the observer will not know that this is irrelevant to the x-ray itself; she may think that she is watching two different operations. One of the clinicians may be smoking or singing; again, without knowledge of the culture and context the observer may think that this is relevant to the taking of the x-ray (Naess 2016 p 181).

⁵² Eg Di Paolo and De Jaegher 2015 p 7; Fantasia et al. 2015 p 114; Cummins 2015 p 335.

⁵³ The false-belief test, cited here by Schilbach (p 404), is sometimes called the Sally-Anne task. The subject sees Sally put a marble in a particular place, then leave. Anne comes in, seen by the subject but not by Sally, and moves the marble to another place. The test subject is then asked, where would Sally look for the marble when she came back to retrieve it? Subjects do not usually 'pass' this test until aged four or thereabouts. As it happens this test has itself been undermined by a second-person approach, which involves not asking the subjects but watching their behaviour in response. They then appear to 'pass' the test between nine and 30 months of age (Brincker 2015).

mental state of the other, what the other's communicative intentions are, and how to contextualise those (p 403). Schilbach's research has found that there are automatic reactions in our social encounters, *before* we have time to respond consciously. The pre-conscious, pre-linguistic state is common ground in the encounter. It arises when we come face to face with the other and it is not possible to control or modify (p 403). The fMRI scan can identify the place of pre-conscious sociality, but it remains opaque: Schilbach calls it 'dark matter' (p 394). Neural activity, but not the self itself, can be seen, and yet, like dark matter, this pre-linguistic, pre-conscious self clearly exerts profound influence. The 'dark matter' generated by the face to face encounter is a highly complex set of interactive physical responses or reflexes, which are so intense in their activity that they support higher level functions, including language (p 403). As interlocutors seek to understand each other they use conversation, but the pre-conscious common ground is already present, and other ways of communicating, such as body language, play their part. 'Interlocutors produce and monitor paralinguistic cues and one another's instrumental behaviour to ensure that they, indeed, understand one another' (p 412). The *a priori* relational self, then, is present in the face to face encounter; it arises there; it can be seen through fMRI scanning to be there. What we see and experience as two people getting to know each other is more accurately described as confirming what we already have: common ground. Our bodies, says Davies, commenting on the Schilbach findings, are fine-tuned to get to know each other interactively through self-organising mutual exchanges that are too rapid to enter consciousness. They happen before we are conscious of them. Rather, one might suggest they call consciousness into wakefulness. Bodies interact materially at 'a point prior to our ability to see the world as a knowing subject' (Davies 2015 p 12).

Davies explicitly connects Schilbach's very recent account of second-person neuroscientific research to the effect of the language of the Julian texts (Davies 2017), arcing back over the centuries of *Gestell* thinking to a Taylorian porous self. In the text, one powerful example of *a priori* porous subjectivity is given in the fourteenth revelation, where the character of the servant is both Adam, who himself stands for everyman, and Christ:

In the servant is comprehendyd the seconde person of the trynyte, and in the seruannt is comprehendyd Adam, that is to sey all men [...] When Adam felle godes sonne fell; for the ryght onyng whych was made in hevyn, goddys sonne myght nott be seperath from Adam, for by Adam I vnderstond alle man (LT pp 532.211ff).

Less dramatically, but with no less import because in saying this she emphasises her porosity with her reader, Julian identifies herself with everyman: ‘by me aloone is vnderstonde alle’ (LT p 442.6ff); and ‘I saw that his menyng was for the generale man, that is to sey alle man [...] of whych man I am a membre’ (LT p 702.5ff). We could say that our consciousness is ‘called into wakefulness’ by Julian’s seeing which she puts into language (Davies 2015 pp 12f): we realise our woundedness and become open to direct encounter with the Christ of her revelations as she writes of our *a priori* porous subjective identity with her.

Enactivist Miriam Kyselo raises the question that, if our subjectivity is fundamentally social, it must be unembodied, because all bodies have definition. The self, she argues, is a social self, created by the back and forth of ‘social distinction and participation processes’ (Kyselo 2015 p 78), but it is not embodied: the body ‘plays an important but rather enabling role’ (p 81). The body is thus not the self, but its mediator. Kyselo’s logic is persuasive, if we have been regarding ‘body’ as the physical entity we walk around in, whose edge stops at the edge of our skin. But Andy Clark, whose work is also drawn upon by the enactivists,⁵⁴ removes the problem of edges by removing the edges of our bodies altogether. The pencil we use for writing, or the stick for walking, or the smartphone for connecting with others or gathering information, all become a ‘kind of unmediated arena for bodily action’ (Clark 2011 p 10). For Clark, our subjectivity is the ever-changing product of numerous encounters or interfaces: within the brain, for example with the various parts of the brain bringing information to the hippocampus to assist its cognition; between the brain and the central nervous system; between the sensory impressions on the skin, through the eyes, ears, nose

⁵⁴ Eg Kyselo 2015 p 79; Cummins 2015 p 330; Elias and Tylen 2015 pp 378, 381.

and taste in the mouth and the central nervous system; and complex cognitive and emotional interfaces with other people. He does not differentiate between encounters that take place within and outside the body.

Julian's understanding of 'body' is porous, for example:

oure good lorde lokyd in to hys syde and behelde with joy, and with hys swete lokyng he led forth the vnderstandyng of hys creature by the same wound in to hys syd with in; and ther he shewyd a feyer and delectable place, and large jnow for alle mankynde [...] And ther with he brought to mynde hys dere worthy blode and hys precious water whych he lett poure out for loue (LT pp 394.3ff).

The material porosity of Christ will be considered further in Chapter Four.

This first aspect of porous subjectivity, that the self is *a priori* relational, is recognised as the 'cut' woundedness of the self by Kristeva and Merleau-Ponty, and confirmed by the second person neuroscientific research of Schilbach which informs the work of the enactivists, who are so convinced of our ontological relationality that they conclude that solitary confinement is a far crueller punishment than has been assumed on these grounds, as it denies the self that is 'hard-wired to be other oriented' (Gallagher 2015 p 407). Julian calls herself wounded, and acknowledges the material porosity not only of herself but also of the Christ she encounters in her revelations.

ii) Encounter with text makes evident our porosity

The second Ricoeurian understanding of porosity is articulated by him as that the experience of hermeneutics is (following Gadamer (1975)) 'belonging-to'; that is, a 'relationship of inclusion which unites the allegedly autonomous subject and the allegedly adverse object' (Ricoeur 1975 p 89). We are *a priori* relational, but it is in encounter that we discover ourselves to be so. This insight can be developed further by reference to the enactivists as the experience of a self that feels itself to be changing in its porous interactive engagement with the other. Enactivists Popova, Raczaszek-Leonardi and Cummins showed, respectively, that reading a text, entering into a

conversation, or just speaking even only to oneself, continuously produce in real time the self that knows itself as porous. For Popova, reading is an enactive performance of ‘intersubjective sense-making’: as we act expecting to be understood, so we write expecting to be understood by our readers (Popova 2015 p 316). Raczaszek-Leonardi sees conversation as a ‘joint project’ enacted between contributors porous to each other and to the task of collective meaning-making (Raczaszek-Leonardi, Debska, and Sochanowicz 2015 p 353). Cummins thinks voice gives rise to ‘a transient subjecthood’ (Cummins 2015 p 329), its employment in different circumstances generating porous subjectivity, such as synchronous speaking or chanting, where if one speaker stumbles the other is likely to as well. Subjective ‘entanglements’ (p 335) happen not just linguistically but in gaze, posture, gestures and blinks, and neurologically. The mutuality in sense-making through voice gives rise to a new kind of ‘subject pole’, which is ‘not co-extensive with the individual person’ (p 336).

Two observations about the Julian texts show the relevance of these studies for my hermeneutical approach to reading them. First, Julian explicitly states that the text that emerges from her encounters with her revelations is to draw its reader into his own encounter with God, that by implication will change him as it has changed her:

leue the beholdyng of a wrech that it was schewde to, and myghtely, wysely and mekely behold in god (LT p 320.36f).

Julian is not a mystical ‘other’ whose transformation we witness, but rather a doorway through which her reader steps into direct ‘beholding’, and has *his* subjectivity transformed. Second, the porous subjectivity of the ‘joint project’ of a conversation occurs continuously as Julian engages throughout the text in dialogue with Christ and God, including her subjective ‘entanglement’ with the changing conditions of his face as he draws close to death in the eighth revelation, to which she pays such close attention. For example, as Christ passes from the terrible pain of the Passion into the ‘blessydfulle chere’ of the Resurrection, Julian writes:

Then brought oure lorde meryly to my mynd: Wher is now any poynt of thy payne or of thy anguysses? And I was fulle mery (LT p 379.9f).

In ‘conversation’ with Christ Julian’s subjectivity is changed: in the moment of his speaking to her she experiences in herself the shift from the profound pain of the Passion to the ‘mery’

Resurrection.

Thus the second aspect of porous subjectivity, that it is experienced in the encounter of self with text, is established.

iii) Encounter with text restores the reader’s, and the text’s, porous subjectivity

The third aspect of porous subjectivity is what it brings about, which is the realisation or restoration of the subject’s porosity because it is experienced in the encounter. Ricoeur writes that poetic language ‘restores’ our ‘participation-in or belonging-to’ (1977 p 24). But the ‘restoration’ reveals a greater potential in the reading subject than had hitherto been realised: the enactivists show that the porous interactive encounter has the effect of producing new, creative subjectivities, for example the Koubova students realised the greater potential of their subjectivity as they became porous to it in themselves and in each other. As Koubova puts it: ‘to make sense means not to insist on some fixed identity and closure, but rather to take the situational counterpart as one’s own potential’ (Koubova 2015 p 67).

The porous and creative subjectivity of other kinds of entities than people can also be realised by means of porous encounter. I offer the following example because it demonstrates how science can be in slavery to *Gestell* subjectivity, but in the hands of a really great scientist, can also be freed from it. Charles Darwin had found a tropical fossil near the surface of the ground in the middle of England, and observed how dismayed his companion was, because the finding, if it was what it seemed, ‘would be the greatest misfortune to geology, as it would overthrow all that we know about the superficial deposits of the midland counties’ (Darwin 1887/1958 p 69). The ‘subjectivity’ of geology, from which its assumptions and inferences about data emerged, was being

summoned to change because of this encounter. By virtue of the encounter with the unexpected or unknown, that which did not fit with the hypothesis accepted by scientists, geology was transformed. The *Gestell* tendency in science is to see only those data which support the current hypothesis. A good scientist, aware of this tendency in himself, must always seek to disprove his hypothesis (Popper 1959). In Darwin's day, geologists were labouring under the assumption that the upper layer of sediment in the midland counties was formed by a particular set of geological movements that Darwin's finding did not demonstrate. Darwin made geology a great deal more interesting and his companion should have rejoiced instead of fearing change. Julian would have: rather like the scientists whose fixed notions are brought into question, that which Julian had understood and believed and defined herself by, for example in the teaching of 'holy chyrch' on hell and damnation, is brought into question by what she cannot deny God has shown her in her revelations (LT pp 427.2ff). By denying neither holy church itself nor the evidence of her eyes in her revelations, Julian makes possible a porosity in the subjectivity of holy church itself, a move I explore in Chapter Four.

As with the subjectivity of geology, Julian's subjectivity, and that of her reader, that emerges from her paradoxical and asymmetric encounters is greater, like the prophets called to greater things (Ricoeur 1995 p 265), for example in the culmination of prayer:

and than shall we alle come in to oure lorde, oure selfe clerely knowyng and god
fulsomly hauyng, and we endlesly be alle hyd in god, verely seyng and fulsomly
felyng, and hym gostely heryng, and hym delectably smellyng, and hym swetly
swelwyng (LT p 481.49ff).

The subjectivity of the self in encounter is transformed, and her cognition is transformed too. She sees, knows, has, feels, hears, smells and tastes what had hitherto been hidden from her. The transformed subjectivity changes everything for the subject.

The text is also realised as porous. Julian's wounds that 'dwellid contynually' (LT p 288.46) were expressions of desire which created an asymmetry that 'summoned' her revelations into being.

The subjectivity is porous on both sides of the encounter and the asymmetric calling that transforms subjectivity is likewise on both sides. It is not just the subjectivity of the reading self that is realised as porous, but also the ‘text’: as we saw in the example, Darwin’s subjectivity as a geologist was changed, and so was the geology he encountered in the form of the unexpected location of the fossil. His openness to enquiry called out a different response from the terrain he was exploring. The point is not that there was some sort of magical material change in the Earth; but rather that in response to his looking openly, the Earth became more porous, revealing new and unexpected things about itself *to him* (and not, for example, to his companion, whose looking was closed, nonporous). Julian’s revelations and the God she encounters in them reveal new and unexpected things about themselves under her enquiring and open gaze. The porosity of the text has been noted by Watson and Windeatt (see above, p 80, and also below, pp 112f), reflecting Julian’s ongoing open enquiry. In the studies that follow, we will see many examples of the creative porosity of the revelations born of Julian’s desire to ‘see’.

Concluding summary

Ricoeur’s observations about the reading subject’s originary ‘belonging-to’ to which the text can restore him have been developed in three ways: the *a priori* relational state of the reading self who begins wounded; the porous subjectivity that is experienced in the encounter itself; and the restoration of porosity that takes place by means of the encounter, giving rise to hitherto unrecognised creative potential. These insights define the second part of my triadic post-Ricoeurian hermeneutical framework, that of the porous nature of the encounter between reader and text. The first part is the performative nature of the encounter. Thus the encounter of the reading self with the text can be characterised as ‘performative and porous’.

Part IV) Developing Ricoeur: reading is creative of ‘niche’

Introductory: Ricoeurian foundation

Ricoeur provides a foundation for the third part of my post-Ricoeurian hermeneutical triad when he writes: ‘what is to be interpreted in a text is the projection of a world which I could inhabit’ (Ricoeur 1975 p 93). He also writes of the world of the text as ‘the new being that is displayed’ (Ricoeur 1995 p 44), opening up possibilities for the reading subject that he could not anticipate or make for himself. The world that preceded the one issuing from the text is the world of the reading subject in which the encounter with the text takes place, which is transformed by the encounter. The third part of the hermeneutical triad, which I am calling ‘niche construction’, thus goes beyond the Ricoeurian foundation by including both the ‘niche’ of the encounter of reader with text and the ‘niche’ that is created by it. By ‘niche’ I mean all the particular features of location, including physical space, things, other people and also prevailing ideas and beliefs which determine the world of Julian in the text and of the reader of the text. The ‘existing’ niche is constructed as it is by virtue of the subjectivity of each: each occupies a niche defined by who she is. This existing niche then interacts dynamically with the performative, porous encounter of Julian with her revelations, and of the reading self with the text; the ‘ensuing niche’ is the creation of the performative, porous encounter of the self with revelation or text. To put it more succinctly: as the subjectivity of the self is changed by her encounter with revelation or text, so her world is, too.

The word ‘niche’ is apt, because the world (niche) that is, and the world (niche) that emerges from the encounter, are particular and specific to the self. Julian’s encounter with her revelations take place in a particular world (as described in the text) of: her illness; her sick room; the people who are in her sick room; the crucifix, which has religious significance for Julian, held before her eyes upon which the revelations take place; Julian’s prevailing beliefs about the teaching of holy church; her state of ‘wounded’ porosity to what she is shown; and her beliefs about her ‘evyn cristen’ and her identification with them. These inner and outer features of her niche play their part in influencing Julian’s encounter. In turn, her encounter with her revelations produces new niches

which, as the following chapters will show, become cosmic in proportion and in what is included in them. As Julian's subjectivity changes, so does her niche. The Julian texts themselves are a niche constructed out of Julian's revelations, emerging from them and embodying them. The reader of the Julian texts brings a niche to her reading, which I am arguing is *Gestell*, a niche in which everything is utilitarianly in 'standing reserve', determined by her 'buffered' subjectivity. The porosity that is realised by the performative reading of the texts constructs a new niche that is not bound to *Gestell*. Davies argues: '[t]hrough such texts, we may receive communicatively a mode of being human in the world which we could not ourselves produce' (Davies 2017 p 16).

This section will explore i) the origin of the phrase 'niche construction'; and ii) its application to my reading of the Julian texts.

i) Source of the phrase 'niche construction'

Oliver Davies has applied 'niche construction' to the study of the medieval mystical texts (Davies 2017), borrowing it from its origin within a recent iteration of evolutionary theory called 'extended evolutionary synthesis' (Laland et al. 2015). Niche construction is the name given to the dynamic interaction between organisms and environment out of which habitats form, which influence and change the organisms, and also have an effect on the wider environment. The fact that seeing a particular kind of nest can tell us exactly what species of creature lives there, without having to see the creature, is evidence of niche construction (Laland and Sterelny 2006 p 1755), as creatures inherit the same nest-type from previous generations.⁵⁵ The nest or niche of a creature in turn affects the creature's behaviour. Humans are lactose intolerant except those humans who live near dairy herds (p 1756). The niche construction of earthworms affects the wider environment as they burrow into the soil to make it act as external kidneys and extensively change the structure and

⁵⁵ The inheritance is not genetic: nest-types are inherited phenotypic, rather than genotypic, variations (Pigliucci and Müller 2010). Phenotypic, as we saw with its use, analogously, by Kristeva, is to do with what shows, such as habitat, rather than with underlying genetic structure. We inherit appearance and behaviour by other means than genetic, including how we build our nests. This is relevant to the ecological challenge, as it indicates that behaviour change (for the better, eg building human habitats that do not harm the Earth) would also be passed on to future generations.

chemistry of the soil (p 1759). ‘Even the inadvertent production of by-products by simple organisms, such as the manufacture of derivative chemicals by photosynthesising cyanobacteria, are consistent, reliable, directed sets of metabolic actions that affect a change in the environment (here, an increase in atmospheric oxygen)’ (p 1755). The increase in atmospheric oxygen is critical for life for some organisms, such as humans, and not others. Niche construction interacts with its environment, affecting and being affected by others.

Niches thus emerge or are constructed from the porous encounter between the self and its environment, and Erwin Straus, an evolutionary biologist writing in the 1950s, identified this porous interdependence explicitly, when he noticed that different perspectives create different niches, even when the niches are the same space. Humans stand upright, he wrote, and that means their world is very different from other creatures on all fours. Straus saw that each organism creates its own world by selecting from its environment some things and not others, depending upon what it needs (Straus 1952/1966). He recognised the dynamic two-way influence of organism and place before the term ‘niche construction’ was coined, and Charles Darwin himself had noticed the influence of place,⁵⁶ leading some biologists to question the special attention given to niche construction now,⁵⁷ but as Vandermeer points out, the proponents of niche construction see their work as a culmination of what others have studied, not a novel intervention (Vandermeer 2004).

⁵⁶ In his autobiography Darwin wrote: ‘Th[e] problem is the tendency in organic beings descended from the same stock to diverge in character as they become modified. That they have diverged greatly is obvious from the manner in which species of all kinds can be classed under genera, genera under families, families under sub-orders, and so forth; and I can remember the *very spot* in the road, whilst in my carriage, when to my joy the solution occurred to me; and this was long after I had come to Down. The solution, as I believe, is that the modified offspring of all dominant and increasing forms tend to become adapted to many and highly diversified *places* in the economy of nature’ (Darwin 1887/1958 pp 120f, my italics). It is consistent with the concept of niche construction that Darwin has such a precise memory of where it was that he solved the problem.

⁵⁷ E Mayr had written about ‘soft inheritance’ in 1982 (Mayr 1982), and Dickens and Rahman (2012), in their review article taking issue with the special ‘extended’ status that has been conferred on niche construction, point out that Julian Huxley had already included competition, selection and random mutation in his ‘modern synthesis’ (Huxley 1942). Edmund Brodie is similarly unimpressed with the suggestion that niche construction is offering anything new to evolutionary theory (Brodie 2005), but its familiarity only serves to embed niche construction within evolutionary theory more securely.

ii) Uses of the concept that contribute to my hermeneutical approach

The concept of niche construction has been used, not least by the enactivists, in ways that are valuable to a hermeneutical approach that foregrounds the text's material effect on the subjectivity of the reader. These are a) the development of the idea of 'affordances' which is what other things become for the person when they are in his niche; b) social aspects of niche construction; c) the recognition that niche construction is not only the place of performative and porous interaction but also embodies it as the creative and material expression of it; and d) the way in which niche construction settles into habitat and thus habit. I will look at each of these developments of niche construction in turn, showing their relevance to my reading by giving examples from the Julian texts.

a) 'Affordances' in niche construction

Human niche construction involves the use of material tools, which the enactivists have termed 'affordances'. Affordances are those things in the world that, as we seek to make sense of ourselves and our surroundings, we engage with interactively and performatively. As affordances are drawn into the interactive performance, so they become instrumental in niche construction. A cup affords us the act of grasping it in order to drink; or a mountain for climbing; or a hat for placing on our head. Anthropologist Agustin Fuentes (2015) notes that humans modify material elements to extend their motor capabilities and this enhances their ability to interact with and change ecologies.⁵⁸ This characterisation of use of things in the environment sounds like Heidegger's 'standing reserve'. But here the relationship between the person and the thing is porous and interactive, not utilitarian: affordances are things that we 'realise' by their use, and are ourselves changed by (Laroche, Berardi, and Brangier 2015). We work out how to use a cup or a path, coordinating ourselves with the thing and making it an affordance thereby. Our ongoing activity is an interaction with the world around us, so cognition is not transcendent knowledge from a distance

⁵⁸ Echoing the work of Clark and Chalmers (1998, their precursor to Clark's 2011 publication).

but sense-making through performance, ‘realised interactively’ in the mix of things (p 41). This ‘different seeing’ of the things around us is indicative of the argument of the thesis: our response to the world emerges from our subjectivity, which is why our response to the ecological challenge has to start with our subjectivity. Rather than dominating and controlling things, we learn to ‘dance’ with them. Marek McGann, who has a similar account of affordances, calls our interactive performance an ‘achievement’ (McGann 2015 p 20). We see this performative interaction with things in the Julian texts, the most important of which is the crucifix her curate holds before her eyes as Julian lies close to death in her sickroom (LT p 291.22ff). The crucifix is an ‘affordance’ on these terms: Julian’s ‘sense-making’ of her revelations involves her performative and porous interaction with it. McGann notes that light is the medium in which the dynamic encounter of agent and affordance takes place as our eyes inspect our environment and we coordinate our movements with the things around us (McGann 2015 p 21). Julian describes her crucifix as self-effulgent (LT pp 290.20ff) as the space around it grew dim, changing her niche from a quotidian sickroom to the place where her mystical revelations can happen.

b) Social niche construction

Our interaction with location is mediated and influenced by the group, argues Fuentes: ‘actual people almost never engage with evolutionarily relevant challenges (be they nutritional, social, ecological, economic, political etc) by themselves, outside of a social (cultural) network, or even outside of spatial proximity, or without reference, to other humans’ (Fuentes 2015 p 303). The fact that humans begin, as it were, with social relationships and shared knowledge means that these factors are critical to evolution and niche construction: they are where we start, not as one plus one plus one, each seeking food, mates and an environment to live in, but straightaway socially and behaviourally acting as a group, and the social and behavioural interactions are multi-faceted.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ ‘Heightened social and behavioural density and concomitant social complexity is a widespread, and potentially ancient, primate pattern, and the social networks of many primates are multidimensional and not best modelled as sequences of dyadic exchanges at either the individual or group level’ (Fuentes 2015 p 304).

Humans create niches socially. Learning and teaching also have their place in niche construction, because they are developmental and evolutionary drivers for humans (Sterelny 2012). Julian's interaction with other people is critical to the niche she is in as well as the niche that is created by her revelations. These people include those who populated her sickroom, for example her mother who tried to close her eyes, thus potentially cutting off Julian from her revelations (ST p 234.29ff). When Julian later dismisses her revelations as ravings, the seriousness of the response from the religious person to whom she speaks changes her perspective (her subjectivity) and she reviews all that has happened (LT pp 632.16ff). The new niche of the text emerges out of this encounter, because (one presumes) she would not have reflected upon the revelations and then written about them if she had continued to think of them as ravings. The people in Julian's sickroom represent and become the means to reach all (LT p 319.22ff). The porous interactions with Julian's sickroom companions will be studied in Chapter Four, where I will also study Julian's psychological niche that formed out of her interaction with holy church and her 'evyn cristen' with whom she identifies. This niche later expands in the eighth revelation to include all creatures and heaven as well, as the study in Chapter Five will show.

c) Niche construction embodies performative and porous encounter

Niche construction takes place *as* we interact with other humans, the landscape, items in the landscape, use language, create symbols and signs, learn and teach. It is a dynamic activity that turns 'space' into 'place' (Davies 2016 p 92), that is both a result of interaction but also causal of it. Space is turned into creative place for enactivists Fantasia and colleagues who see how two people, meeting in a corridor, will dance to one side and then the other, unconsciously mirroring each other, evincing pre-cognitive relationality and creating a place, for a moment, in which they interact performatively and porously, before uncoupling and making space to move past each other (Fantasia, De Jaegher, and Fasulo 2015). The authors suggest that interaction opens up new domains, or niches, of sense-making that would not happen were they alone. For Julian, space

becomes place as she porously and performatively interacts with Christ in her revelations, a niche whose edges are formed by the surrounding darkness and whose interior is lit by the self-effulgent crucifix. In that place, new worlds are created which ultimately include all of creation and heaven, as I will explore in Chapter Five.

The created/creative nature of niche construction also shows itself in the Koubova experiment in which the students find, over time, new porous selves in the performance space created by the supportive attention of their fellow students who also created the material space by where they sat, configuring a place for their performing student colleague. Just so, Julian's sickroom attendees penetrate the gloom that surrounds the niche of her encounter with Christ on the self-effulgent crucifix, with important interactive and porous functions individually, such as her mother's arm reaching to close Julian's eyes, and also twice collectively, when their interaction brings into the niche of the revelations all 'them that shuld lyue' (including the reader), for whom, Julian realises, the 'avysion was schewde' (LT p 319.32); and later, when her sickroom companions laugh with her, they bring into the niche of Julian's revelations all her 'evyn cristen' (again, including the reader) (LT p 348.24ff).

For Raczaszek-Leonardi and colleagues, a conversation between people that is directed towards coordination makes language and the people using it creative and performative, and the participants may be said to be 'pooling the ground' (Raczaszek-Leonardi, Debska, and Sochanowicz 2015 p 362). The ground itself becomes creative as something more happens than the sum of the contributions to the conversation by the participants. Cummins saw that voice, in creating subjectivity, connects the subject speaking with world 'in real time' (Cummins 2015 p 330): we create new niches as we speak. And as the reader interacts porously with the narrator whom she brings into being as she reads, she also brings forth a new reality, a 'world that until then is not my own, but becomes my own when I enact it' (Popova 2015 p 326). So in turn Julian's readers, interacting porously with the text, find a new niche is being constructed as their subjectivity changes.

Enactivists John McGraw and colleagues describe the emergence of artifacts from encounter in their research (McGraw et al. 2015). Their study was of groups of people designing cars out of LEGO. From the ‘encounter’ of working together on a task, an object emerged like imagination embodied. McGraw takes this process to be paradigmatic of cultural evolution: ‘cognitive and cultural schemas find material realisation — are embodied — in the artifacts of material cultures’ (p 367), in the way they are used and embedded in action and interaction. Roman Catholicism without bibles, incense, wafers, crucifixes and tombs is not easily recognisable as Roman Catholicism, he suggests. In times of persecution it would have had to be itself without these things, but precious things were squirrelled away in order to be kept safe for easier times, thus proving the case. In the same way, Julian’s text may be said to have been ‘pressed’, to use a term from Andy Clark (2011 p 60), from her encounter with her revelations as an embodiment of the porous interactions they involved.

The body of Christ, with which Julian so powerfully interacts, especially in the eighth revelation, can itself be characterised as a niche because it is the *place* where our encounter with God becomes possible. Elizabeth Johnson writes of the Incarnation as the creative outcome of God’s wish to communicate with creatures (Johnson 2007 p 40). Stanislas Breton’s account of Paul trying to mediate Christ to the nascent Church is a description of the creation of a porous niche that can, paradoxically, accommodate that which has burst all known bounds, which he describes as a ‘passage from the most high to the most low, from the most universal to the most particular [...] from divine transcendence to the earth of our works and days’ (Breton 2011 p 106). In the eighth revelation of the dying of Christ the stable platform of the crucifix Julian’s curate held before her dimly-seeing eyes (LT p 291.21), a seeming externality on which the revelations take place, provides the location for the revelatory encounter and is also creative within the encounter, as Julian’s niche becomes cosmic, explored in Chapter Five. Even more creatively, the fourteenth revelation of the ‘example’ of the lord and the servant gives birth to a niche or world that is so novel

that Julian has to return to it and re-enact the performative encounter again and again, over decades, in order to make sense of what she saw (LT pp 519.66ff).

d) Niche construction forms habitat and thus habit

One feature of niche construction is that it creates a place where activity can come to rest. For organisms, habitats are places where they can feel safe and habitual action, such as reproduction, becomes possible. After the ‘action’ of perception, as enactivist McGann (2015) puts it, out of which new possibilities arise, comes a period of habit-forming as organisms become used to new ways of doing things, often quite quickly. Thus, an unforeseen outcome of the McGraw experiment was the way that the first LEGO model quickly became a design template for future models. The first models emerged out of the interaction of the team, technological restraints and other unanticipable contingent events in the niche. But then, ‘relatively arbitrary forms’ (McGraw et al. 2015 p 372) were settled upon by the teams, and despite their arbitrariness they became authoritative for later models, over time increasingly so. The pattern that emerged was of rapid conventionalisation and path dependency. The authors point to the enduring use of the QWERTY keyboard despite the fact that the technological constraint that led to that layout (typewriter key clashing) has long since disappeared. Once it has found its place to be, the creativity of encounter quickly settles into habit which in turn influences behaviours (for example, how we learn to touch-type). Habits are resistant to change, as we saw in the example of Darwin’s fossil and the assumptions within geology that it did not substantiate. But porosity can become a habit too. Clare Carlisle might have had Julian in mind when she writes of the way in which, through habitual practice, the ‘less ordinary’ habit of philosophy becomes a contemplative practice that ‘knowing by acquaintance, turns the soul slowly towards wisdom’ (Carlisle 2014 p 147). For Julian, habits described in the text that she had formed from her earliest youth, such as her attentive loyalty to holy church, her wounds of contrition, compassion and longing to God, and her deep knowledge and experience of prayer, formed her own steadfastly porous niche which was a creative place in

which the revelations could take place and from where she could performatively participate. In turn, the revelations formed new niches and new habits, undermining (some) old ones.

The use of the Julian texts to contribute to our salvation from a *Gestell* subjectivity is to propose that the new ‘habit’ created by the niche of performative, porous interaction with the text will be of porosity itself. It could be thought that the porosity of the subject is a means, and once the niche is settled, it becomes buffered. But remaining porous will be critical to our salvation from *Gestell* subjectivity and our ongoing response to the ecological challenge. Julian remains an example of this as she establishes a habit of porosity in her early life, is porous to the revelations as they take place, and continues to be porous to new and deeper understandings of the revelations in the decades that follow.

Concluding summary

Niche construction, a term coined in evolutionary theory, has been harnessed in this section in service of the third part of the post-Ricoeurian hermeneutical triad, which recognises the significance of psychological and physical ‘place’ in the hermeneutical encounter. The niche in which the performative and porous encounter between Julian and her revelations, or reader and text, takes place influences the encounter, and is transformed by it, so that new niches emerge from the encounter. Niches contain affordances: those things within the niche which are dynamically interacted with, such as the crucifix held before Julian’s eyes. They include other people, such as those who populated Julian’s sickroom. Niches that are constructed from the performative and porous encounter can be said to embody them, as Julian’s text embodies her revelations. Finally niches become habituated as the new place in which further performative and porous encounters can take place. ‘Niche construction’ thus describes how the same world can be so utterly different depending on our subjectivity.

The third part of the post-Ricoeurian triadic hermeneutical approach now being in place, it can be described fully as performative, porous and niche-constructing.

Conclusion: a post-Ricoeurian hermeneutical approach

This chapter has developed a triadic hermeneutical framework with which to approach the Julian texts. Its foundation is Ricoeurian, based on his assertion of the autonomy of the text, the interpreter *in medias res*, the transformative effect of poetic texts on their reader, and the asymmetrical summoning of the reader who is not, therefore, able to be a controlling or *Gestell* self in relation to the text. On that stable foundation, drawing additionally on the insights of enactivism and niche construction as well as theology and philosophy, I built three interdependent structures of, first, ‘performative interaction’ where the meaning of the text emerges in real time as the reader encounters it and engages performatively with it; second, of ‘porous interaction’ of the reader with the text which brings about the realisation of our *a priori* porosity and also gives rise to newly creative porosity; third, of a ‘niche’ where the reading takes place, which participates in and is transformed by the performative and porous interaction of the encounter.

Mapped onto the Julian texts, the post-Ricoeurian hermeneutical approach will bring to the fore important features over the next three chapters, including: Julian’s wounded openness; Christ’s woundedness; Julian’s steadfast loyalty to holy church; her attitude of reverent dread; her porous identification with her ‘evyn cristen’ and her readers; her way of looking at her revelations; her prayer; the performative interaction between Julian and the Christ she encounters in the eighth revelation and the cosmic niche that is created there; and her interactive and porous meaning-making of the parabolic fourteenth revelation. These detailed investigations will show a pattern of a self summoned to performative and porous encounter in niches, out of which new niches are created. In turn, the reader is invited by this approach, and by Julian herself (LT p 731.1f), to enter porously into the performance of the text, and out of a transformed subjectivity ‘saved’ from *Gestell*, give birth to new niches in which, I will hope to show, the ecological challenge may be addressed.

CHAPTER FOUR

Julian's Wounds

Introduction

This chapter is the first of three that will study the Julian texts in detail. The post-Ricoeurian hermeneutical triad developed in the previous chapter will be the lens through which the text will be read and interpreted. I will seek to show that the method of the Julian of the text (not the historical Julian) is, by her own account, performatively interactive, that the revelations involve porous transformation, and that they emerge from and are productive of world or niche. By foregrounding these characteristics of the Julian texts, and the Julian who is found therein, it is proposed that a transformation into porosity of the reader today can be effected, which offers salvation from *Gestell* subjectivity, and opens up the possibility of new ways of seeing and being in the world that are not harmful to it. I am not trying to make an objectively demonstrable empirical claim about the Julian texts (the attempt would be a product of *Gestell* thinking), but rather offering a way of reading them that should make this transformational power evident in the lived experience of reading as I work through the text itself: an in-the-moment experience that will in part depend upon the reader being 'summoned', as the post-Ricoeurian approach makes clear.

Because of the lack of historical evidence linking the Short Text (ST) and the Long Text (LT) with the anchoress Julian mentioned independently by Margery Kempe and the bequests, the only Julian I will comment upon is the Julian found in the text itself. I cannot stand her outside her experience of her revelations and see her writing in the fourteenth-fifteenth century anchorhold we think she inhabited, and nor can I place myself amongst her medieval (we surmise) audience. But Ricoeur's hermeneutical approach has provided the basis upon which I can thoroughly mine the text itself, regardless of my lack of knowledge of the historical author and lack of ability to think like a fourteenth century Norwich dweller. Thus everything that is in the text about Julian and her audiences, and everything the Julian of the text says, is valid for my purposes. Since it has not even been possible to establish the dates of LT and ST in relation to each other, I will refer to both in a

way that does not give significance to which came first. The text, both LT and ST, will be my world for the next three chapters, and in it, using the post-Ricoeurian approach I developed in the previous chapter, I hope to uncover rich, creative wisdom to help change our *Gestell* subjectivity that is so harmful to the planet.

Julian's method can be characterised in this post-Ricoeurian way: she interacts performatively and porously with her revelations, and the interaction in turn affects her subjectivity and her world, creating or realising a new niche embodied in the text. In what Oliver Davies refers to as the 'intimate communication' of her writing (Davies 2017 pp 15, 22), Julian in turn effects a performative, porous interaction between her reader and the text, which has the power to change his subjectivity and make possible the imagination and perception of new worlds or niches that do not harm the planet.

To unpack the proposition further: the revelations themselves were a performance in which Julian participated interactively and porously: she took an active part in them, interrogating them visually and verbally and musing over them; her subjectivity was wholly involved in the performance and open to be changed by it, hence porous; and the niche in which the revelations took place, which influenced them, was also changed by them. Julian's performative, porous, niche-constructing encounter continued throughout the revelations themselves and, as the text indicates, for many years thereafter (LT p 520.86), in what Davies has characterised as a *lectio divina* on what she saw (1992 p 44).

The participative method of Julian's seeing is described as 'techyng inwardly' (LT p 520.87), when she is puzzling over her fourteenth revelation whose meaning is mysterious to her. Rather than look elsewhere, to other scholars or texts for example, for understanding, Julian is to look again, ever more closely, at the visual detail of the revelation itself:

It longyth to the to take hede to alle the propertes and the condescions that were shewed in the example [...] seeing inwardly with avysement all the poyntes and the propertes there were shewed in the same tyme (LT pp 520.87ff).

The more closely Julian looks at exactly what was there in the ‘example’ that is the fourteenth revelation, the more her subjectivity and hence her world changes, and so, too, does the reader’s. The method undermines pre-conceived frameworks, or in Ricoeur’s terms, a transcendent *cogito* self bringing its own prior world to the text, or in the terms of this thesis, a *Gestell* subjectivity. Julian, we might say, porously looks, and keeps looking until some illumination dawns, rather than embarking on a process of inductive reasoning. Julian describes her method following her description of the fourteenth revelation of the lord and the servant, but, as Nicholas Watson points out, this exegetical method is applied to all Julian’s revelations (Watson 1992 p 97). Julian looks at each of them with the same close attention to detail: ‘I sawe and vnderstode that euery shewyng is full of pryvytes’ (LT p 519.73), using the same ‘painterly’ eye (Baker 2005 p xii): a detailed visual inspection which creates meaning, not least because it detects paradox. Julian looks unsparingly at things which, set alongside each other, do not make sense, for example:

yf it be tru that we be synners and blame wurthy, good lorde, how may it than be that I can nott see this truth in the, whych arte my god, my maker in whom I desyer to se alle truth? (LT p 512.25ff).

The asymmetric tension leads to Julian’s theological ‘*quaestio*’ (Turner 2011 p 70). In not turning away from that which shows itself clearly and does not make sense, her subjectivity opens to new possibilities and her niche changes.

Julian’s ‘text’ is her revelations; our text is LT and ST. As the revelations are performative for Julian, so in turn, for us, the text itself is performative: it is a linguistic, niche-constructing act that springs out of Julian’s liminal encounter, and the language of the text that was pressed from the porous encounters betrays a consequent freshness and liveliness that inspires many hundreds of years later, as Davies observes (2017). Julian’s text is a performance in which all her readers participate, and continues after she herself has seen and said all that she can:

[The book] is nott yett performyd as to my syght. For charyte, pray we alle to gedyr with goddess wurkyng, thankyng, trustyng, enjoyeng, for this wylle oure good lord

be prayde, by the vnderstandyng that I toke in alle his owne menyng, and in the swete wordes where he seyth fulle merely: I am grownd of thy besechyng. For truly I saw and vnderstode in oure lordes menyng that he shewde it for he wyll haue it knowyng more than it is (LT p 731.2ff).

Like Ricoeur's summoned self (Ricoeur 1995) and the students in the Koubova experiment (Koubova 2015), Julian subjects herself to the journey to which her revelations call her, and invites her readers to do the same.

In this chapter I will study specific extracts themed around the notion of 'wound' which is so closely related to porosity, and which is a recurring concept throughout the text, as follows: I will in Part I) look at the concept of wound itself as porosity, how Julian asked for it, experienced it and stayed wounded, how Christ's woundedness is critical to the interactive nature of the revelations and what they mean to Julian, and how the text itself may be said to be wounded. In Part II) under the heading of the wound of 'contricion', the first of the three wounds for which Julian asked, I will consider the texts referring to 'holy chyrch' and to 'reuerente drede'. In Part III) under the heading of the second wound of 'compassion', I shall look at texts which refer to other people, first those in the room with Julian, then her 'evyn cristen' and then those beyond. In Part IV) under the heading of the wound of longing to God, I shall consider texts referring to seeing, seeking and prayer. In conclusion, I will propose that, in this chapter, my thesis question has begun to be answered in the affirmative: that the Julian of Norwich texts can be read today in such a way that they can help address the twenty-first century ecological crisis, by transforming our 'buffered' subjectivity into the 'porous' subjectivity Julian brought to her revelations; additionally I will propose some emerging insights for a Julian-inspired, 'porous' response to the ecological crisis.

Part I) Wounds as porosity

Introductory

In the text, ‘wound’ carries the force and effect of the porousness of self that leads in turn to porous encounter. It resonates with Michael Scott’s anthropological interpretation of the Arosi people (2014), whose ‘wonder’ at the land ‘wounds’ them so as to make the strength of the land available to them, and Mary-Jane Rubenstein’s etymological suggestion (2008 p 9), connecting ‘wound’ with ‘wonder’.⁶⁰ ‘Wound’ is of critical importance to Julian’s method interpreted by the post-Ricoeurian triad. The asymmetry of woundedness generates encounter; woundedness is the porous nature of the subject and what it interacts with; and woundedness is realised performatively in interaction.

i) Julian’s wounds

Julian asks for wounds at the beginning of her text, as she describes, according to ST, hearing the story of St Cecilia’s three wounds which were her martyrdom, a story that awoke in Julian the desire to be wounded. This is when the participative porousness that will lead to her revelations and her text is set in motion:

I harde a man telle of halye kyrke of the storye of saynte Cecylle, in the whilke schewynge I vndyrstode that sche hadde thre wonndys with a swerde in the nekke, with the whilke sche pynede to the dede. By the styrrynge of this I conseyvede a myghty desyre, prayande oure lorde god that he wolde grawnte me thre wonndys in my lyfe tyme, that es to saye the wonnde of contricyoun, the wonnde of compassyoun and the wonnde of wylfulle langgyng to god (ST pp 204.46ff).

This was the third of three gifts she had asked of God, the first being to have deeper knowledge of the Passion and the second to have an illness that brought her to the brink of death. Both these ‘gifts’ could be characterised as woundings too, for both have the quality of interactive participation (of Julian with Christ) and will be addressed as such in the following chapter which considers the

⁶⁰ See above fn 49.

eighth revelation of the Passion. The third gift of three wounds, conceived as a ‘mightie desyre’, was asked for ‘mightly with out anie condicion’ (LT p 288.44f), unlike the first two, which were asked for on condition that they were God’s will. The first two ‘passid from my mynd’, but the third ‘dwellid contynually’ (LT p 288.45f). Julian wishes to remain constantly and consistently porous to God. The third gift of three wounds are the means by which she may be so. They can thus be thought of as a continuous presence running under the text, making an appearance from time to time: for example towards the end of the eighth revelation when Christ is said to suffer his Passion ‘with a contriccion and compassion’ (LT p 378.35); and later as gifts of God, visited by his grace to prepare us for ‘blysse’, ‘made evyn with seyntes’ (LT p 451.24f):

whom oure lord wylle he vysyteth of his specialle grace with so grett contriccion,
and also with compassion and tru longyng to god (LT p 451.21ff).

Identified with ‘wonder’ and ‘marvelyng’, the wounds are even more obviously present as a continuous dynamic force within the text, rendering the encounter between Julian and her revelations asymmetric, as she never ceases to wonder and marvel at what she is shown: from her ‘full greatly was I a stonned for wonder and marvayle’ (LT p 296.17f) at her first revelation to her ‘I wondryde and merveylyed with alle the dylygence of my soule’ (LT p 510.6) at the fourteenth. ‘Marvelyng’ is the porous means by which Julian’s subjectivity is transformed as she looks at that which she does not yet understand. She uses it of herself throughout her text.⁶¹

The wounds are gifts: Julian does not assume she has them, but she asks for them continually, and the asking creates the asymmetry which in post-Ricoeurian terms is needed to energise the encounter’s performative and porous power. Thus Julian opens herself to interactive porosity from her early life and remains ‘wounded’ thereafter, creating the conditions under which, first, the revelations then come to pass when she is thirty years old and a half (LT p 289.2); second, the revelations are made meaningful by her interaction with them at the time; and, third, Julian

⁶¹ Eg (all LT) pp 300.13; 308.54; 315.55; 336.6; 338.23; 358.23; 363.30; 383.8; 384.23; 407.39; 424.37; 436.3; 437.11; 495.6; 505.2; 505.7; 510.6; 516.28, 32; 519.65; 524.130; 527.161; 528.171; 529.185; 530.189; 531.203; 532.210; 539.268; 546.9, etc.

continues ‘wounded’ to their meaning ‘oftyn tymes’: ‘fro the tyme that it was shewde [...] xv yere after and mor’ (LT p 732.13f); and in respect of the fourteenth revelation, ‘twenty yere after the tyme of the shewyng saue thre monthys’ (LT p 520.86).

ii) Christ’s wounds

Christ is wounded. The porosity is on both sides of the encounter in the revelations, most of all in the fourteenth, where the subjectivity of Christ and the subjectivity of Adam are so porous to each other as to be indistinguishable, a remarkable insight to which I will return in Chapter Six. The wounds of the Passion which Julian porously and performatively experiences are described in detail in the eighth revelation, which I will explore in Chapter Five. Other references to Christ’s woundedness are found in the tenth revelation:

Oure good lorde lokyd in to hys syde and behelde with joy, and with hys swete
lokyng he led forth the vnderstandyng of hys creature by the same wound in to hys
syd with in;
[...] he brought to mynde hys dere worthy blode and hys precious water whych he
lett poure out for loue;
[...] he shewyd hys blessyd hart clovyn on two (LT pp 394.3ff).

The meaning of these wounds is endless love: ‘he shewyd to my vnderstandyng [...] to mene the endlesse loue that was without begynnyng and is and shal be evyr’ (LT p 395.10ff). Christ is wounded in all eternity which means that his wounds participate in the ‘blyssydfulle godhede’ (LT p 395.11). Thus the revelation shows that not only is Christ wounded, but that God himself is porously interactive, the ‘endlesse loue’ an endless flow of participation within himself as Trinity and with his creatures.

In her later discourse on Christ as mother, Julian refers back to the wound shown in the tenth revelation, drawing an analogy between the mother giving her child suck and Christ feeding us from his wounded side: ‘Oure tender mother Jhesu, he may homely lede vs in to his blessyd brest by his

swet open syde' (LT p 598.38f). The link is explicitly made with the eucharist as Christ feeds us with himself as a mother feeds her child:

The moder may geue her chylde sucke hyr mylke, but oure precyous moder Jhesu,
he may fede vs wyth hym selfe, and doth full curtesly and full tendyrly with the
blessyd sacrament, that is precyous fode of very lyfe (LT pp 596.29ff).

The wounded side is the location of the performative interaction between Christ and his beloved, the place where his motherhood is expressed. The effect is powerful as the subjectivity of Christ's love is identified as that porous, unfailingly tender and vulnerable love of a mother, as delicate and capable of hurt as an open wound. Motherhood and woundedness continue to be identified with Christ's porous subjectivity as he is that by which childbirth takes place, in the bloody, scatological event of 'bodely forthbryngyng' (LT p 599.49), a reference that brings to mind Julian's earlier observation that Christ is in the earthy bowel movement of the 'purse fulle feyer' that is 'openyde and sparyde ayen fulle honestly [...] it is *he* that doyth this' (LT p 306.36f, my italics). And it is the 'deerworthy blode and precious water' (LT p 608.64f) that flow from his wounded side to make us clean, when we run to him having made ourselves 'foule' (LT p 606.50), as a child to its mother: 'The blessed woundes of oure sauour be opyn and enjoye to hele vs' (LT p 608.65f).

The references display the features of the post-Ricoeurian triad, as the subjectivity of Christ and that of Julian interact performatively and porously. This is demonstrated in Julian's experience in the tenth revelation of entering Christ's body through his wounded side. It was Christ's 'swete lokyng' that was the means by which he 'led forth the vnderstandyng of hys creature' into the wound in his side (LT pp 394.4ff). Christ's looking and Julian's looking interact porously (one third of the post-Ricoeurian triad). Their mingled looking also interacts performatively (the second part of the triad) as by means of it Julian enters his side. And, true to Julian's method, the reader is in turn drawn in to the new niche that has been created (the third part of the triad): 'ther he shewyd a feyer and delectable place, and large jnow for alle mankynde that shalle be savyd' (LT pp 394.5ff). As Bernadette Lorenzo observes, Julian is reborn (Lorenzo 1982 p 170), but so is her reader. In this

exquisite performative intermingling of porous subjectivities the revelations may be seen as a ‘joint project’ (Raczaszek-Leonardi, Debska, and Sochanowicz 2015).

iii) The text’s wounds

The text itself displays wounds. That is to say, Julian’s theological ‘musings’, as Kevin Magill describes them, are integrated into the visions themselves. She interweaves bodily sight, ghostly sight, words spoken to her in dialogic and monologic form and her own theological responses (Magill 2006 p 78). Writing of the composition of the Julian texts, Nicholas Watson observes how the revelations, Julian’s understanding of them and the writing have become inextricably intertwined with one another in the texts (Watson 1993). For example, there is a chronological porosity in Julian’s declaration, as she is describing the eighth revelation, that: ‘this hath *evyr be* a comfort to me, that I chose Jhesu to be my hevyn’ (LT p 371.17f, my italics), as Watson discusses (1993 p 658); and again the chronological but also theological porosity of the text of the fourteenth revelation, so much so that it is not described as an ‘example’ in the list at the beginning of LT (LT p 284.43ff): it had become ‘irrecoverably mingled with two other layers of apprehension’ (Watson 1993 p 677).⁶² Barry Windeatt notices that Julian gives no primacy to the original of what she saw over what she was then shown, in extended time, about their meaning (Windeatt 2015 p xxv), as the narrative sometimes seems pushed to the outside and the ‘musings’ become central. Julian’s narrative of two days ‘ends up almost splitting at the seams under the exploration of its own implications’ (Windeatt 2016 p xxiv). Evoking a powerful image, Nicholas Watson writes: ‘It is as though the Biblical text in the centre of its manuscript page were literally to ‘overflow’ and to merge with the surrounding apparatus’ (Watson 1992 p 93). The revelations are in this way themselves porously involved in a joint project with Julian’s interpretation of them in the performative encounter that becomes the ‘niche’ that is the text. The ongoing fifteen or twenty years of ‘wounded’ interaction with the revelations she describes in the text could thus be extended even

⁶² ‘first, the insights produced by Julian’s prolonged attempt to grasp the exemplum; second, her growing understanding of the meaning of her revelation as a whole’ (Watson 1993 p 677).

further into the time she spent creating the text. The niches of revelation; *lectio divina* on revelation; and the bringing of revelation into linguistic embodiment are all porous to each other, and in turn, in unbroken continuity, the text we receive, in the same modality, is porous to our reading, as it yields still more meaning into today: a ‘never-satiated process’ (Watson 1992 p 100).

Concluding summary

In this section I have identified Julian’s own woundedness as critical to her response to the revelations, for which she specifically importunes God, and which she sustains as an attitude prior to her revelations, throughout her encounter with them and thereafter as she reflects and writes about them. I have also shown that Christ in the revelations is wounded, as regards the wounds of the Passion, his involvement in bodily expression of childbirth, excretion and breast milk, and his ontological porosity that makes the encounter in the revelations porous for him as well as for Julian. Finally I have suggested that the text itself might be seen as wounded, as the revelations porously interact with the musings about them and the writing of them.

Part II) The Wound of ‘Verie Contricion’

Introductory

The wound of ‘contricion’ (contrition) can be understood as that which engenders humility through deep penitence. Interpreted by the post-Ricoeurian framework, contrition brings Julian porously and asymmetrically to the encounters of her revelations. The self that is wounded by contrition is a willingly summoned self, not ‘master’ of her revelations but ‘disciple of the text’ (Ricoeur 1975 p 95). She has no prior sense of absolute certainty about the world and herself. With her wound of contrition, she declares herself a penitent, ready to learn. Under the theme of contrition I will consider i) Julian’s hard-to-define subjectivity; ii) the significance of ‘holy chyrch’ for her subjectivity; and iii) the significance of ‘reuerente drede’, which is urged throughout the text.

i) *Julian's subjectivity of contrition*

The person of Julian as she emerges in the text is true to the porous subjectivity of contrition in the sense that she refuses any special status or identity separate from her readers. The title of anchoress is reserved for the rubrics and not claimed by the Julian of the text. She does not refer to herself as a nun. She explicitly denies being educated: 'This reuelation was made to a symple creature vnlettyrde' (LT p 285.1). She also explicitly denies being a teacher: 'god for bede that ye schulde saye or take it so that I am a techere, for I mene nouyt soo, no I mente never so' (ST p 222.40f). As Ritamary Bradley notices, although the texts are in the pedagogical tradition or category, Julian's device is to become invisible so Christ becomes the teacher. 'By using the concept of Christ as teacher, Julian creates a rhetorical strategy which sets her work apart from other writings of its kind' (Bradley 1982 p 127). Bradley regards Julian's mysticism (if that is what it is) to be summed up in Poiret's cataloguing of her as 'taught of God, profound and ecstatic' (p 138).⁶³ Unlike the Wisdom writers who portray themselves as instructors of their readers, Julian passes back all pedagogy to Christ, so that her readers see not her but Christ. She might be thought of as standing alongside her readers, as one taught of God, but among us: hard to see.

It can even be misleading to regard Julian as a mystic, as Denys Turner (2011) and Kevin Magill (2006) have both argued, writing of her as a theologian and a visionary respectively. Julian's nature might have been captured in Jean-Luc Marion's 'new phenomenology' whose challenge is 'to go to the limit of what gives itself without limits' (Caputo and Scanlon 1999 p 7). But for Marion, 'mystical theology' is needed, because of the 'excess of intuition' experienced by, for example, the disciples at the Transfiguration or on the road to Emmaus. There is no concept to match the experience, there are no words to describe what they saw (p 69). For Julian, by contrast, there are usually plenty of words to say, words which emerge like St Paul's *phusis* (Breton 2011 p 124) out of her wish to describe what she saw accurately, including what she saw theologically, and

⁶³ Quoted in the Colledge and Walsh introduction: 'The Protestant Pierre Poiret, who knew of Julian from the [1670] Cressy published text, has, in his 'Catalogue Auctorum Mysticorum', an entry '*Julianae, Matris Anachoretarum, Revelationes de amore Dei. Theodidactae, profundae, estaticae. Anglice*' (Colledge and Walsh 1978 p 14).

she thereby does go some way to giving material form, the ‘thickness’ Julia Kristeva (1984) accords poetry, to the ‘excess of intuition’ she experienced in her showings. The friendly way in which Julian strives to communicate to her ‘evyn cristen’ all that she saw is quite unmysterious, so that, by participating performatively in seeing what she sees, we can know as she knows, including those mysterious things over which she puzzles, such as the fourteenth revelation. The mystery is reserved for the privy of God, not the person of Julian. Windeatt calls her a ‘contemplative’ (2016 p vii), whose meditations on her revelations become as narratively important as the revelations themselves (p xxiv). Julian does not say that God wanted her to write down her revelations, but she does understand that God wants them to be made known (p xx). For Nicholas Watson Julian is a theologian for whom the Trinity is the exegetical key in the ‘polyphonic complexity’ of her revelation (Watson 1992 p 86), seen in the ‘process of abstraction from the visual to the theological’ (p 88). In the same way as the persons of the Trinity are impossible to separate, so her showings, her understandings of her showings, and her reader’s reception of both cannot be disentangled; and the Trinity is present in all stages of seeing, receiving and understanding (pp 98f). Vincent Gillespie calls Julian a ‘vernacular theologian’ whose text ‘subverts normal critical (and perhaps theological) reading. Originality is not the issue: truth to her showing is’ (Gillespie 2011 p 404).

While Vincent Gillespie calls Julian a ‘master of multiple discourses, capable of alluding to and pastiching various contemporary styles of religious and philosophical writing’ (Gillespie 2011 p 403), Colledge and Walsh (1978) see her rather as a scholar of theology, noting throughout the text numerous resonances and echoes of the writing of her (fourteenth century assumed) day. The Julian of the text, meanwhile, describes herself as ‘a symple creature vnlettyrde’ (LT p 285.1). I favour the description the Julian of the text uses of herself, because of my post-Ricoeurian method of taking seriously what is in the text and only that, and also because it evinces her porosity through humility, but I cannot match the adjective ‘unlettered’ to her mastery of language in the poetic nature of the text as a whole, her vocabulary and syntax and her use of rhetoric, puns, poetic forms, narrative voices, allegory, simile, metaphor and imagery, which Gillespie honours as ‘skilful’ (Gillespie 2011

p 403). I can only make sense of ‘unlettered’ by assuming it refers to Julian not having knowledge of Latin, and the internal evidence of the text bears witness to this. Julian’s only use of Latin appears to be liturgical: she ‘seyde oftynn tymes: Benedicite Dominus’ (ST p 217.4); she ‘never stynte of these words: Benedicite Dominus’ (LT p 317.2); and she refers to the ‘Pater noster, Aue and Crede’ (ST p 258.9). These indicate that the Latin Julian knew was what she heard and recited at Mass. She gives one direct quotation from the Bible, Philippians 2.5 which is, intriguingly, an exact translation from the Vulgate Latin Bible: the syntax is identical. Julian’s rendering is: ‘ylke saule aftere the saying of saynte Pawle schulde feelee in hym that in Criste Jhesu’; the Vulgate Latin is: ‘*Hoc enim sentite in vobis quod et in Christo Jesu*’ (Colledge and Walsh 1978 p 234.25f and fn). There are many resonances with Biblical texts, but no other quotations, and this one is only in ST.⁶⁴ Julian clearly knows her Bible, referring to a number of characters: David, the Magdalene, Peter and Paul, Pilate and Thomas whom she refers to as ‘Thomas of of Inde’ (ST p 255.19f; LT p 446.14f), ‘of Inde’ a tradition, not described in the New Testament, in which the disciple Thomas was said to have sailed to India to establish a church there. Julian also produces some non-scriptural characters: Saint John of Beverley to whom she refers as if he were a local and well known saint (LT p 446.16ff), and Saint Cecilia (ST p 204.47ff). In her eighth revelation she refers to ‘Pylate’ and ‘Dyonisi of France’ (LT p 368.27) legends about whom are to be found in the *Gospel of Nicodemus* and *The Golden Legend* (Watson and Jenkins 2006 p 186). *Pace* Colledge and Walsh, these are not theological scholars whose works Julian draws upon, but lively characters populating her text, participating in its drama and manifesting its effect. The resonances with other writers and their theology are never direct quotations and could be accounted for in what the historical Julian

⁶⁴ If we date the ST in the fourteenth century, this is an early translation of the Bible into the vernacular, perhaps the first by a woman. The suggestion was made by Julianne McClean in the ‘Roots of Mysticism’ course, London, 2003. It is historically plausible to suggest that the direct translation was dropped from the (therefore later) LT from fear of Lollardy, since part of that heresy was to produce translations of the Bible in the vernacular.

would have heard in homilies;⁶⁵ ideas that were the theological currency of the day or, as Benedicta Ward puts it, she could have worked them out for herself: an original thinker like Anselm of Canterbury, neither had footnotes to their texts (Ward 1995 p 26). Julian is highly intelligent, but that does not mean, Ward wryly observes, that she must therefore have been taught by men (p 26). In a rare specific self-reference Julian does claim her womanhood, but only to confirm the fragility (porousness) of her subjectivity: 'I am a womann, leued, febille and freylle' (ST p 222.41f).

The contrite Julian claims no fixed prior subjectivity, then, of anchoress, nun, teacher or scholar. She is 'liminal' (Davies 1992 p 39); 'poised' (Turner 2011 p 15). This lack of fixity places her, for my purposes, in the porous, interactive movement of the post-Ricoeurian triad. Andy Clarke (2011) would make sense of her subjectivity's emergence as a dynamic expression of numerous encounters, not a thing with edges. She is (always) ready to be transformed, receiving her visions which she sees performatively, porously and interactively. From her transformed subjectivity she in turn offers dynamic porous interaction with her 'evyn cristen' by means of her text, itself 'pressed' from encounter (Clark 2011 p 60). The contrite, hard-to-see Julian gives birth to her text, which is not itself divinely inspired, so noted by Davies (Davies 1992 p 40), but is the *phusis* born of her porous encounter, which *was* divinely inspired, and it carries the transformative power of the original vision, inviting its reader into interactive porous encounter in turn.

ii) *Contrition and 'holy chyrch'*

One fixed base which Julian, however porous she herself might be in receiving her revelations, does not surrender is the presence and teaching of 'holy chyrch' (holy church). But as I will show, Julian's refusal to deny holy church, despite its teaching's absence in her revelations, not only, counterintuitively, increases the porosity of her own subjectivity, but because she is so identified with it, brings holy church itself into the niche of her revelations, making its subjectivity porous too.

⁶⁵ Nicholas Watson writes: 'the flexibility of her exposition, the variety of its strategies, and the rapidity with which it shuttles between particular moral points and far-reaching theological ones all suggest the influence of biblical exegesis — mediated, perhaps, mainly through preaching — on her writing and thought' (Watson 1992 p 92).

Julian had a habit of holiness, as Clare Carlisle (2014) would express it, a habit established from her youth (LT p 351.3f). Julian's repeated assertion that she was grounded and knowledgeable in the teaching of holy church means that holy church had been, for all her life before the revelations, the place of her performative expression of that holiness through contrition. For example, she writes of the importance of turning to one grounded in holy church as contrition quickens in a penitent soul :

contriscion takyth hym by touchyng of the holy gost [...] Than vndertakyth he penannce for every synne enjoyned by his domys man that is groundyd in holy chyrch (LT pp 449.6ff).

With a typical humility, Julian writes of seeking solace in holy church while she waits to be shown the 'great privity' which is in God. Having seen that 'moch pryvete is hyd whych may nevyr be knowen in to the tyme that god of hys goodnes hath made vs worthy to se it', she falls yieldingly back into the arms of holy church, to sustain her habit of holiness, keeping her contrite until such time as God is ready to reveal his great secret. 'And now I yelde me to my modyr holy chyrch, as a sympyll chylde owyth' (LT p 494.49f).

Holy church is thus present, non-adversarially, in the niche of Julian's encounters. She asserts its right to be there through her firm belief in what holy church teaches. She had believed it before her revelations and still believes as she is writing her text:

But in all thing I beleue as holy chyrch prechyth and techyth. For the feyth of holy chyrch, which I had before hand vnderstandyng, and as I hope by the grace of god wylle fully kepe it in vse and in custome, stode contynually in my syghte, wyllying and meanyng never to receyve any thyng that myght be contrary ther to (LT p 323.21ff).

She sees, continuously, the fixed poles of 'endless love' *and* 'the teaching of holy church':

And ytt in alle this tyme fro the begynnyng to the ende I had ij manner of beholdinges. That one was endlesse conntynuant loue with suerness of kepyng and

blysfyl saluacion, for of this was all the shewyng. That othyr was the comyn techyng of holy chyrch, of whych I was befor enformyd and groundyd and wylfully hauyng in vse and in vnderstandyng (LT pp 491.15ff).

Holy church has not been dismissed by the revelations. It keeps its porous place within Julian's niche, participating and interacting with what we might call, with McGann (2015) and Laroche (2015), her other 'affordances'. It is present, for example, in Julian's armoury as protection against the fiend that threatens her in the sixteenth revelation:

My bodely eye I sett in the same crosse there I had seen in comforte afore that tyme, my tong with spech of Cristes passion and rehersyng the feyth of holy church, and my harte to fasten on god with alle the truste and the myghte, that I thought to my selfe, menyng: thou hast now great besenes to kepe the in the feyth, for that thou shuldest nott be taken of thyne enemys (LT pp 650.2ff).

The habit of holiness remains, after all the revelations are over, with holy church a continuing affordance in the niche alongside reason and the holy ghost:

By thre thynges man stondyth in this lyfe, by whych iij god is wurschyppyd and we be sped, kepte and savyd. The furst is vse of mannes kyndly reson. The seconde is the comyn techyng of holy chyrch. The iij is the inwarde gracious werkyng of the holy gost; and theyse be alle of one god. God is grounde of oure kyndly reson; and god is the techyng of holy chyrch, and god is the holy gost, and alle be sondry gyftes, to whych he wylle we haue grete regarde, and accordyng vs therto (LT p 707.2ff).

Holy church is thus established as an affordance not only in Julian's niche within which the revelations take place, but also in the transformed niche generated by her encounter with the revelations. But its presence causes two difficulties. First, the contrition that it generates falls short of the contrition that recognises God, even blinding the soul to God because of a false meekness. Second, it teaches that the soul will be judged, whereas the revelations contain no judgement, only

endless love. Characteristically, Julian refuses to assert an excluding theology that will explain away the contradictions, but rather keeps both in her sight. This generates asymmetry, a transformed subjectivity of herself and, by association, of holy church itself. It keeps its place in the niche, as it were, by participating in the transformation of subjectivity the paradoxical revelations bring about.

So, first, Julian has shown that holy church has established in her a habit of holiness from her youth, but it is not, of itself, enough. Through the understanding that the revelations give Julian, she sees that her own contrition born of her habituated holy church faith falls short. Holy church helps us to repent of our ‘synne that we know’, but the wretchedness we feel because of this holy church version of contrition blinds us to the most important thing that God wishes above all: ‘our beholdyng and oure enjoyeng in loue’ (LT p 668.27f):

that [god] is alle loue and will do alle, there we fayle [to beleue] [...] for whan we begynne to hate synne and amend vs by ordynance of holy chyrch, yett ther dwellyth a drede [...] And thys drede we take some tyme for a mekenes, but it is a foule blyndnes and a wekenesse; and we can nott dyspyse it as we do another synne that we know (LT pp 668.30ff).

Not only is the ordinance of holy church not enough, it can have a blinding effect, making us think that the wretchedness we feel at our sin is a right feeling of meekness, when in fact it, too, is a kind of sin, because it blinds us to God’s love. The wound of contrition, for which Julian asked, she understands *not* to be the false meekness that buffers the self and makes it blind to God.

Second, if judgement is of such importance to the teaching of holy church, where is it in the intense encounter she is experiencing through the revelations? She writes that she wishes to have ‘som syght of hel and of purgatory’ (LT pp 427.2ff). She does not do so, she adds, in order to undermine what holy church has taught: for ‘I beleued sothfastly that hel and purgatory is for the same ende that holy chyrch techyth it for’ (LT p 427.3f). But for all her asking, she is not shown more than that the devil is damned: ‘the devylle is reprovyd of god and endlessly dampned’ (LT p

427.10). She is not shown, at any time, any person who is damned (not even ‘the Jewes thatt dyd hym to deth’ (LT p 428.21f)⁶⁶). Julian cannot be ‘fulle esyd’ (LT p 487.17); the ‘dome’ or judgement is ‘medelyd’, mixed. One is ‘hyghe endlesse loue, and that is that feyer swete dome that was shewed in alle the feyer revelation in whych I saw hym assigne to vs *no maner of blame*’ (LT p 487.13ff, my italics). The other is ‘hard and grevous’, requiring the Passion of Christ which ‘reformyth it’, as holy church had taught. So why was only the ‘hygher dome’ showed to her, when she knew only too well the ‘lower dome’ of holy church?

The hygher dome god shewed hym selfe in the same tyme, and therfore me behovyd nedys to take it. And the lower dome was lernyd me before tyme in holy chyrche, and therfore I myght nott by no weye leue the lower dome (LT p 488.23ff).

Julian presses the point: how true in God’s sight is the ‘dome’ of holy church? The longing in her to see and understand is born of the asymmetry of God’s ‘dome’ and the ‘dome’ of holy church.

She expresses the way in which her own subjectivity is changed by this unanswered paradox but it is risky: she hopes God’s mercy and grace will protect her uncertainty. I will, she declares, ‘kepe me in the feyth in evyry poynt, and in all as I had before vnderstonde, hopying that I was ther in with mercy and the grace of god’ (LT p 429.24ff). In this she is like the saints. There are some things that we cannot yet understand, some things that are hidden in God; she would try to be like ‘the seyntes in hevyn’ (LT p 429.31f) and wait with the paradox: ‘than shalle we only enjoye in god and be welle apayde both with hydyng and shewyng’ (LT p 429.32ff). Julian’s niche contains an attentive waiting with paradox, but it is an active attention: she cannot leave the question alone. Dispensing with saintly patience, she returns with increasing urgency to the paradox over the ensuing chapters, her importunity finally giving birth to the ‘example’ of the lord and the servant, her fourteenth revelation. This is the culmination of the revelations, the most mysterious and the most theologically insightful, original and challenging, even today. This showing, which I will

⁶⁶ As Denys Turner points out, this anti-semitic stab, however historically explicable, shows a side of Julian many readers would rather not see (Turner 2011 p 18).

study in detail in Chapter Six, emerges from and for a transformed Julian, whose porous subjectivity is able to see what would have been invisible to her if such urgent, asymmetric questioning had not been generated. Even when she did see it, she barely understood what she was seeing, and spent twenty years (LT p 520.86) re-inspecting it in order to draw out its meaning. Julian's subjectivity, then, was brought into porous interactivity by her insistence on keeping holy church non-adversarially and troublingly in her niche.

The presence of holy church in this niche of transformational seeing brings it, too, into porous encounter, by means of its influential and unmovable presence in Julian's selfhood. I am suggesting that Julian's subjectivity is so identified with holy church that when her subjectivity is transformed, so is that of holy church. Brought into performative encounter with the revelations, Julian realises the porosity of her contrition and its porous subjective intermingling, ultimately, with God's love. But the implications of this performative encounter of Julian's subjectivity, which has been so defined by holy church, means that holy church itself is participating in the porous encounter. Its subjectivity, too, is realised as porous and interactive. Nicholas Watson notices that for Julian, 'even the truth God revealed to the Church is provisional' (Watson 1992 p 93), because the 'nott yett performyd' (LT p 731.2f) meaning of the revelations is the 'never-satiated process of love' (p 100). Furthermore, Julian identifies those, including holy church, who are God's lovers, who will be 'scornyd and mokyd and cast out' so as to 'breke' them from their 'veyne affeccions' (LT p 409.14ff). Holy church specifically 'shall be shakyd in sorow and anguyssch and trybulacion in this worlde as men shakyth a cloth in the wynde' (LT pp 408.6ff). Like Julian's habit of contrition, like her 'evyn cristen', and like our *Gestell* subjectivity, holy church's stability is undermined, 'shaken' into porous performative interactivity.

The intersubjective interactivity of holy church is not to destroy it or reform it; that is not Julian's concern. Rather it is to be restored to its 'belonging-to' in Christ, and thus the post-Ricoeurian framework helps reveal Julian's insight. As a mother gives suck to her child, she sees, Christ gives us suck through the sacrament, and what he means by that is what holy church means.

All it preaches, teaches, all the health and life its sacraments proffer, and all the goodness it ordains:

‘I it am’:

The moder may geue her chylde sucke hyr mylke, but oure precyous moder Jhesu, he may fede vs with hym selfe, and doth full curtesly and full tendyrly with the blessyd sacrament, that is precyous fode of very lyfe; and with all the sacramentes he systeynyth vs full mercyfully and graciously, and so ment he in theyse blessyd wordys, where he seyde: I it am that holy chyrch prechyth the and techyth the (LT pp 596.29ff).

The porous, loving subjectivity of holy church is restored through Christ’s own porous selfhood, in performative interaction as he ‘feeds’ us with the sacrament, as intimately and tenderly as a mother offers her breast and gives suck to her child. Julian’s seeing creates a niche in which holy church becomes an affordance, drawn into the interactive performance of sacramental sustenance by means of which Christ himself feeds his ‘evyn cristen’, such that holy church’s subjectivity cannot now be separated from his.

iii) Contrition and ‘reuerente drede’

‘Reuerente drede’ (reverent dread) runs like a golden thread through Julian’s text. As with the teaching of holy church, she returns to it many times, suggesting that it, too, is her lifetime’s habit. I connect it with the wound of contrition because, in Julian’s careful definition of the phrase, it evokes an attitude of attentive, open, humble asymmetry, hence porosity and a consequent performative response. What is being attended to is so important and so holy that our watching must be for the slightest move, our listening for the subtlest sound. Reverent dread is the attitude Julian brings to her revelations and is at the performative heart of her method from the start:

And alle thys our lorde shewde in the furst syght, and yave me space and tyme to behold it. And the bodely syght styntyed, and the goostely sygte dwellth in my vnderstandyng. And I aboode with reuerent drede, ioyeng in that I saw, and

desyeryng as I durst to see more, if it were hys wylle, or lengar tyme the same
syght (LT pp 318.17ff).

Reverent dread is part of Julian's subjectivity, readily available and active in her, making her porous to the revelations and willing to see more or to look for longer at what she is shown, as God wills. It can be thought of as an essential psychological affordance in the niche of the interactive project of the revelations. She knows how it is evoked:

For of alle thyng the beholdyng and the lovyng of the maker makyth the soule to
seme lest in his awne syght, and most fyllyth hit with reuerent drede (LT p
309.64ff).

Steadily beholding and loving God, Julian's established habit, evokes reverent dread in the realisation of the 'littleness' of the soul. This introduces asymmetry into the interaction in Julian's niche and ensures the porous openness of the soul to God:

The reverence that I meane is a holy curtiuous drede of our lorde to which meekenes
is knyht; and that is that a creatur see the lord meruelous great and her selfe
mervelous litle (LT p 628.9f).

Reverent dread is not to be wasted upon, for example, sin, except insofar as it makes us hastily return to God: 'be we nott a dred of thys [synne] but in as moch as dred may spede' (LT p 615.19). We should 'nothyng dred but hym' (LT p 629.23). Indeed, dread of sin brings about the mistaken meekness that blinds us to God's love, as we saw, and keeps us from the reverent dread that is our contemplation of God. Nor should other kinds of dread be mistaken for reverent dread, though they have their relative value. 'Dreed of afray' which comes suddenly to us in our frailty, has a value because it purges us as do other kinds of pain or illness that are not sin, if we bear it patiently (LT p 671.2ff). 'Drede of payne' generates a response which has an initial value, and here Julian makes a distinction that clearly illustrates the porosity of the triadic encounter I have been using. She writes of the 'drede of payne' as 'harde' whereas the comfort of the holy ghost, associated with reverent dread, is 'softe'. 'Drede of payne' works for the one who is 'harde of slepe of synne', whose heart,

we might say, is hardened. His nonporous self has to be woken up and made porous again. The dread of pain does this; importantly it awakens contrition, and then he is receptive or porous enough to receive the ‘soft comforte of the holy goste’. The dread of pain penetrates: it is an ‘entre’ (LT pp 671.6ff). The other dread that is distinguished from reverent dread is ‘doughtfull drede’, which draws us into despair. This bitter despair God turns into sweet love by grace: ‘the bytternesse of doughte be turned in to swetnes of kynde loue by grace’ (LT p 673.13ff).

These other kinds of dread highlight by contrast the fact that although reverent dread reveals asymmetry and evokes a response, it does not do so by being fearful. It is associated for Julian with enjoyment and sweetness, such as the experience of the time when prayer comes to an end in the simple, joyful contemplation of God, when with ‘speciall grace’ God ‘shewyth hym selfe to our soule’. As our sight is ‘onyd’ with that which caused us to pray, so then are we ‘mervelously enjoyeng with reuerente drede and so grett swettnesse and delyght in hym’ (LT p 477.24). Prayers come to an end because there is nothing more to do or want except to behold him. Reverent dread is thus a form of deep and joyful contemplation⁶⁷ whose asymmetrical humility energises the post-Ricoeurian triadic interactive encounter. It is inseparable from love. Love and reverent dread are, says Julian, ‘bredryn and they are rotyd in vs by the goodnesse of oure maker’ (LT pp 673.20f). Love and reverent dread are interactive performers in the heart of our subjectivity and at the heart of Julian’s niche of revelation, giving birth to more of themselves: the more we see God, the more we love, the more reverent dread. The contemplation that is reverent dread is performative, energising the post-Ricoeurian triad, giving birth like Breton’s *phusis* to a new subjectivity in Julian, to the text and, by our encounter with the text, in us. Reverent dread is *realised* by the revelations. The more it is practiced, the more it is understood, the softer it becomes, the more our subjectivity is transformed into or by it so that we no longer feel it as a separate affordance: ‘there is no drede that fully plesyth god in vs but reverent drede, and that is softe, for the more it is had, the less it is felte, for swetnesse of loue’ (LT p 673.17ff). A reverent dread that is present but not felt resonates with

⁶⁷ Colledge and Walsh characterise Julian’s reuerente drede as ‘contemplation’ (Colledge and Walsh 1978 p 682.35 fn).

Schilbach's 'dark matter' (Schilbach et al. 2013): the response stirs and is active in the face to face encounter with God, without any consciousness of it. It is there already in our subjectivity.

The niche in which the performative contemplation of reverent dread takes place is not limited to a few people. Heaven and earth and all creatures are included: as the great cause and purpose of God become manifest, so 'for wonder an merveye all creatures shulde haue to god so grett reuerent drede' (LT p 681.27f); the reverent dread is so activating that 'the pyllours of hevyn shulle tremylle and quake' (LT p 681.29). And later, Julian writes again of the cosmic niche quaking because of the 'over passing' love and reverent dread all heaven and earth has towards God:

For this reverent dred is the feyerrer curtesy that is in hevyn before goddys face;
and as moch as he shall be knowyn and lovyd, ovyr passyng that he is now, in so
much he shall be drad, ovyr passyng that he is now. Wherefore it behovyth nedys to
be that alle hevyn, alle erth shall tremylle and quake whan the pillers [of heaven]
shall tremylle and quake (LT pp 682.42ff).⁶⁸

For Julian, reverent dread is an indispensable attitude in her experience and sense-making of her revelations. It is evoked through contemplation of God, which creates the asymmetry of longing as the soul sees its littleness in contrast to God and is made reverent thereby. Julian characterises reverent dread as 'softe' contemplation (LT p 673.19), which in its softness makes the self realise its porous subjectivity and openness to transformation. It is not fearful. With patient practice of prayer it emerges as a joyful oneness with God. Not only the single soul but all heaven and earth are included in the niche of reverent dread as God makes his meaning manifest.

⁶⁸ The Biblical reference appears to be Job 4-6, as Colledge and Walsh suggest, and Job 26:11: 'the pillars of heaven tremble' (Colledge and Walsh 1978 p 683.46 fn). Here and elsewhere when I quote from the Bible I use the New Revised Standard Version.

Concluding summary

In this section I have explored Julian's subjectivity through the lens of her asked-for wound of contrition. She defies categories of scholar, teacher, mystic and theologian, though her writing displays all of these qualities. Rather she retains, in her unwillingness to be the object of the text, a porous subjectivity. This she brings to her revelations. She also brings a fierce loyalty to holy church, but the paradoxes that this evokes serve to increase the dynamic interactivity of the revelation-niche and deepen her questioning. The attitude of reverent dread ensures a sustained openness to transformation.

III) The Wound of Compassion

Introductory

I use Julian's wound of 'compassion', understanding the word as 'suffering with', as a way into exploring Julian's porosity to the subjectivity of others. This section will investigate the ways in which Julian interacted with the others who were present with her at the time of her revelations, and the way in which she identifies with her readers more generally, in this way drawing them into transformative encounter and, as I have suggested, restoring porosity.

The revelations are no individualised message to a special mystic visionary whom we look up to with awe and envy:

leue the beholdyng of a wrech that it was schewde to (LT pp 320.36f)

nor have they turned Julian into a teacher:

god for bedde that ye schulde saye or take it so that I am a techere, for I mene nouyt soo, no I mente never so (ST p 222.40f).

They are, insists Julian, for all Christians:

Alle that I say of me I mene in person of alle my evyn cristen (LT p 319.33f)

and she looks beyond even this limitation of participation in the niche of her revelations. Julian is thus a kind of everyman and the niche formed by her subjectivity is porous to all.

i) Those whom Julian was with

I begin my exploration of Julian's 'compassion' with the people who populated Julian's sick room. A 'niche' is formed by the room in which Julian lay in her bed, ill to the point of death, with various characters who make their appearance in the narrative, participating interactively with the 'joint project' of Julian's revelations. One is her curate, called to her bedside. He holds before her face a crucifix, so that she can steadfastly behold her redeemer. She is half sitting up, and had kept her eyes fastened upwards, towards heaven, but understands that as her body fails, she will be able to rest her eyes on the crucifix her curate holds for longer. She consents to do so, and the crucifix, held all the time by the curate, becomes the affordance on which the revelations take place. All about the crucifix becomes dark, but the crucifix itself was held in 'a comon light, and I wiste not how' (LT pp 290.20ff). The curate holding the crucifix is thus present throughout the revelations and the text, in the shadows. We know nothing of him, nor of how he responds to what is happening to Julian. After his invitation to Julian to 'looke ther vpon and comfort thee ther with' (LT p 291.23f), he does not speak again, but only laughs (see below). He is a crucial affordance in the niche, however. He is the armature for the Cross of the Christ whom Julian encounters so powerfully. When in the eighth revelation Julian is offered the choice of looking upwards and away from the bloody, dying Christ, towards heaven, she refuses, despite having had her gaze so fixed before the curate arrived, and her niche is dramatically re-imagined as she understands that this bloody, agonised, foul-faced Christ *is* her heaven. The curate is the steady, attentive presence, like the supportive audiences of Koubova's experiment (Koubova 2015), who turned space into 'place', the niche in which transformational interaction could safely happen.

Julian's mother is a second character, who at a critical point in the eighth revelation thought Julian had died and sought to close her eyes.

My modere that stode emangys othere and behelde me lyftyd vppe hir hande before
my face to lokke mynn eyenn for sche wenyd I had bene dede or els I hadde dyede
(ST p 234.29ff).

The Long Text omits this passage, which falls at a climactic moment of the eighth revelation of Christ's Passion, a moment when it would have been of supreme importance to Julian to be able to see. As we will discover when we explore this revelation in detail in the next chapter, the action of Julian's mother has its interactive effect in the niche of the revelation, making the encounter of Julian with Christ ever more porous, their subjectivity intermingling as the mother's action emphasises the merging of Julian's experience with Christ's Passion, both in Julian's nearness to death and in the witness of her mother as Christ's mother witnessed his dying. Apart from this dramatic intervention which influences the encounter of the revelations, Julian's mother remains another Koubovian attentive presence, like the curate, present throughout in the shadows.

A third character is in the form of a religious person who is not present throughout, but comes to Julian at the conclusion of the fifteenth of her sixteen revelations. He is thus a critical first audience for Julian's expression of her revelations. And to her first audience, Julian is, astonishingly, utterly dismissive of them:

Then cam a relygyous person to me and askyd how I faryd, and I said I had ravyd
to day. And he loght lowde and interly. And I seyde: The crosse that stode before
my face, me thought it bled fast (LT pp 632.16ff).

This is the first chance Julian has to say what has happened to her and she summarises her revelations as hallucinations: all they amounted to was a crucifix that seemed to her to bleed as she raved. But her visitor takes a different view:

and with this worde the person that I spake to waxsed all sad, and merveylyd (LT p
633.19f).

The seriousness with which the religious person responds completely changes Julian's attitude to what has happened. His first witness is the performative interaction that Ricoeurianly

‘explodes’ (Ricoeur 1995 p 61) Julian’s world in which she had as yet made nothing of the revelations. His response means that Julian will ultimately write the text we now have, because she would never have reflected so long and hard on what had happened, and written down her experience, if she had thought the revelations were those of a raving woman.

And anone I was sore ashamyd and astonyd for my rechelesnesse, and I thought:
this man takyth sadly the lest worde that I myght sey, that sawe no more thereof
(LT p 633.20ff).

The man did not see her revelations, and yet he believes; the oblique reference to the biblical story of Thomas (whom Julian has mentioned among those saints who had erred (LT p 446.14)) sets the man in an honourable place in the niche as one whom Christ specifically blesses, having believed and not seen (John 20:29). This ‘affordance’ in Julian’s niche establishes the veracity of her revelations and of her own subjectivity: he is an independent non-witness responding to her words only, confirming in Julian that she should take herself very seriously indeed. The encounter is of critical importance. The interaction of Julian and her religious visitor is performative intersubjectivity for both of them and, in the world of the text that then emerged, for all of us as we encounter it:

I beleft hym [the visitor] truly for the tyme that I saw hym, and so was than my
wylle and my menyng ever for to do without end (LT p 634.26ff).

Julian, her subjectivity changed by this encounter, ‘without end’ will now ‘loue [the revelations] evyr joyeng’ (LT p 652.24). She will look at them again and again within her soul. She had called the revelation ‘ravyng’, but Christ ‘wolde nott lett it peryssch, but shewde hyt all ageene within my soule’ (LT p 653.31f). Her porosity to the revelations will become a habit as she relives them: ‘wytt it *now* [...] *now* thou seest it (LT p 653.36, my italics). Her attitude will be, like the religious person’s, one of ‘marvelling’ (LT p 296.18), which, as we saw, critically maintains Julian’s porosity throughout the text and the revelations of which she writes: the retrospective ‘marvelling’ is rekindled in her looking again, and is repeated throughout the text, emphasising the Daviesian

immediacy of communication as the text, the revelations, and the reader all retain their porosity to each other.

Julian's porosity as one among her 'evyn cristen' is established by this encounter: she is not some special mystic, since she nearly missed the whole point of her revelations and so should not be rated as anything special, as she observes self-deprecatingly of the episode with the religious person: 'Here may yow se what I am of my selfe' (LT p 634.30ff). We are to understand from Julian that this meeting is described in order to show us that it is the revelations, and not her, to whom we should be attending. And yet it is she whom the religious person took seriously, and so her subjectivity remains a critical participant in the niche, not least because her subjectivity is identified with everyman, as we shall see.

There are two references to Julian's interaction more generally with those who are in the room with her. At the point, just after her first revelation, when she believes she is about to die, she thinks that what she has seen is for the living, so they are to share it with her:

In alle this I was much steryde in cheryte to myne evyn christen, that they myght alle see and know the same that I sawe, for I wolde that it were comfort to the, for alle this syght was shewde in generalle. Than sayde I to them that were with me: It is this daye domys day with me [...] This I sayde for I wolde they schulde loue god the better [...] For in alle thys tyme I wenyd to haue dyed, and that was marveyle to me and wonder in perty, for my thought this avysion was schewde for them that shuld lyve (LT p 319.22ff).

Her 'avysion' or revelation was for the living, her 'evyn cristen', represented by those who were in the room with her and, by that token, to 'the', that is, her reader. She herself was going to die, so she had to pass on what she had seen to those about her, for clearly her revelations were for them, not just for her. Her niche, formed by the revelations, is porous, folding into its seeing the subjectivity of others, so that Julian's subjectivity becomes universal. The niche of the sickroom populated with its characters becomes the microcosm of the niche that includes all 'evyn cristen'.

Later, when Julian laughs at the overcoming of the fiend, she makes those around her laugh also, and this puts her in mind of her 'evyn cristen':

I thought that I wolde that alle my evyn crysten had seen as I saw. Then shoulde all they a lawchyd with me (LT p 348.24ff).

Julian's sickroom companions can thus be understood as critical affordances in the niche of her revelations. They ensure she shares the revelations, right at the start understanding they are for all and not just for her, and at the end being assured that they are not the ravings of a dying person but to be taken seriously. The small group that is around her becomes the porous gateway to all her readers, identified by her as her 'evyn cristen'.

ii) Julian's 'evyn cristen'

Julian's wound of compassion can be connected with her recurring insistence that she is identified with her 'evyn cristen'. She is not a special individual teacher of mystical truth but engaged in a 'joint project' with her readers. The revelations she experiences, the energy or passion of that encounter, are for all. We see together with her. Her method is to make herself invisible, in so doing enabling the creative encounter that she has experienced to be experienced directly, in turn, by her 'evyn cristen' that is her reader. This has consequences, which I will consider a) for Julian's subjectivity and b) for that of her reader; as c) 'evyn cristen' reveals herself to be everyman.

a) Julian's subjectivity is 'evyn cristen'

Julian's subjectivity is interwoven with her reader who is her 'evyn cristen'. She insists that all that happens to her, all that she sees, is for her 'evyn cristen'. Thus, in the text, 'I' *means* 'evyn cristen'. Julian's subjectivity is already interactive, already in porous relationship: 'Alle that I say of me I mene in person of alle my evyn cristen' (LT p 319.33). If she looks just at herself she is nothing; but she is one with her 'evyn cristen':

For yf I looke syngulery to my selfe I am ryght nought; but in generall I am, I hope,
in onehede of cheryte with alle my evyn cristen (LT p 322.9f).

In order for her 'evyn cristen' to receive as Julian has received, she must become invisible among them. Maurice Merleau-Ponty articulates this soft and porous subjectivity that melts to allow the other to be as she is when he writes of perceiving only when there is total negation of the I, then 'what there is' is also 'such as it is' (Merleau-Ponty 1968 p 53), and further: 'I do everything that depends on me in order that the world lived by me be open to participation by others' (p 53). Julian's self-negation makes her everyman, and her task is, it seems to me, accurately described by Alain Badiou (2003) with reference to St Paul:

Whoever is the subject of a truth (of love, of art, or science, or politics) knows that, in effect, he bears a treasure, that he is traversed by an infinite power. Whether or not this truth, so precarious, continues to deploy itself depends solely on his subjective weakness. Thus, one may justifiably say that he bears it only in an earthen vessel, day after day enduring the imperative — delicacy and subtle thought — to ensure that nothing shatters it. For with the vessel, and with the dissipation into smoke of the treasure it contains, it is he, the subject, the anonymous bearer, the herald, who is equally shattered (Badiou 2003 p 54).

Julian, like Paul, will destroy the thing she has seen and carries if she herself becomes too 'hard' a vessel. Julian's soft porosity has her among us, an 'evyn cristen' herself, thus placing her, too among the Koubovian audience, allowing others to perform (Koubova 2015 p 63). She is 'softe' (LT p 673.19) but present, and her presence in the niche makes possible the transformed subjectivity and new niche of her reader.

b) The 'evyn cristen' reader's subjectivity is made porous in turn

For the reader, the effect of Julian's identity with him is to engender participative response. We do not sit back and admire Julian as she and only she receives her 'marvellous' (LT p 296.18)

revelations. We too receive them, by our performative, ‘marvelling’ porous participation. ‘For the slow, deliberative and prayerful reader, the written *Revelation of Love* must be, or be meant to become, the showing’ (Watson 1992 p 96). Badiou writes that the truth Paul declared was ‘militant’, creating a new kind of subject, a new kind of ‘me’, for all, equally: ‘[t]he production of equality is the material sign of the universal’ (Badiou 2003 p 108). Julian’s revelations are for all: ‘for alle this syght was shewde in generale’ (LT p 319.24). The meaning of the revelations for the reader is experienced enactively, not passively, and there is no step, or distance, between what Julian encounters and what the reader encounters. It is the power of Julian’s text that is working on us and in us. Oliver Davies accounts for our participative response thus: ‘the transformation which began as an interior movement in the soul of the mystic is itself incarnated in literary form and becomes communicable to those of us who come after’ (Davies 1992 p 52). Marion Glasscoe suggests that Julian is thinking aloud rather than presenting polished ideas, and ‘the reader is [thus] involved in a primary mental process, and this in itself is an essentially creative element in the response evoked by Julian’s account of her revelation’ (Glasscoe 1993 p xviii).

Julian’s intention, established in her description of her first revelation, is that the reverent dread she brings to her showings should be the same as that which her ‘evyn cristen’ will bring:

In alle this I was much steryde in cheryte to myne evyn christen, that they myght alle see and know the same that I sawe (LT p 319.22ff).

The meaning of the revelations will remain hidden if this participation is not entered into by the reader. Julian sees inwardly, ‘by goostely syght’, that which she cannot show as openly as she wishes, but the reader will see for himself, better than Julian can describe, because his encounter will be direct:

but I trust in our lord god that he shall of his godnes and for iour loue make yow to take it more ghostely and more sweetly then I can or may tell it (LT p 323.32ff).

The Julian of the text wishes us not to look at her but directly at what the revelations reveal: ‘leue the beholdyng of a wrech that it was schewde to, and myghtely, wysely and mekely behold in

god' (LT pp 319.33ff). Of course we, her readers, *do* look at Julian, because we learn from the way she encounters her revelations how we in turn should encounter them in their literary form in the text. Julian through her text demands the same porous, performative, interactive subjectivity of us as the revelations have done of her. Meaning, for us, then emerges in the performative encounter, as Julia Kristeva and the enactivists have shown. It is the asymmetry of our own contemplative reverent dread — not Julian's, even though we learn from her — that will activate the porous encounter between us and God in the revelations, to transform our subjectivity and consequently our niche.

c) '*Evyn cristen*' is *everyman*

I propose that Julian's subjectivity is porous to all creatures, not just to some (Christians). First, we can establish that Julian's invitation to contemplative reverent dread was to all, unlike, for example, the author of *The Book of Privy Counselling* (Hodgson 1982a) and *The Cloud of Unknowing* (Hodgson 1982b). The anonymous author of *The Cloud* was clear that his or her work was only for those especially called to perfection. As we saw in the discussion in Chapter Two of the dating of ST in relation to LT, ST includes one passage that could indicate that Julian agreed there were special men and women that desire [...] to lyeve contemplatifelye' whom she contrasts favourably with 'thaye that er occupied wilfullye in erthelye besines, and evermare sekis worldly wele (ST p 215.41ff), but this passage is alone in the distinction it makes. The parallel passage in LT, as we saw, has no such division. Rather it enjoins all 'evyn cristen' to prefer God to worldly things, because there is rest in God, whereas there is none in things that are made. We:

nedeth vs to haue knowledge, that vs lyketh nought all thing that is made, for to loue
and haue god that is vnmade [...] we seeke heer rest in this thing that is so little,
wher no reste is in, and we know not our god, that is almightie [...] for all that is
beneth him suffyseth not to vs (LT p 301.24ff).

And elsewhere in ST the division is not maintained, eg:

And in alle this I was mekylle styrrede in charyte to myne evynn cristene, that thaye myght alle see and knawe the same that I sawe (ST p 224.8f).

The contemplative prayer that ‘onyth the soule to god’ (LT p 475.2), we can conclude, is to be experienced by all Julian’s ‘evyn cristen’, if their enactive reverent dread is kindled. But who are Julian’s ‘evyn cristen’? She worries regularly at the question. ‘I speke of them that shalle be savyd’, she writes, ‘for in this tyme god shewde me no nother’ (LT p 323.20f) but she keeps looking beyond the group, to try to see those whom holy church has said are damned. She never sees them; for all her asking, she is not shown more than that ‘the devylle is reprovdy of god and endlessly dampned’, and can only infer, because holy church taught her thus, that ‘alle the creatures that be of the devylles condiscion’ (LT pp 427.10ff) are included among those who are damned. Her inference is not convincing.

Julian is convincing when she writes of what she sees rather than what she infers, and in her looking, ‘evyn cristen’ becomes ‘evry man’ (LT p 403.16). For example, she writes of a ‘serteyn creature that I louyd yf it shulde contynue in good levying’ (LT p 432.3), but she is given no answer in respect of her friend. She is told ‘[t]ake it generally’ (LT p 432.7). It is more worship to God to ‘beholde hym in alle than in any specyalle thyng (LT p 432.9f). When God shows her that she will sin, he shows that he means all will sin: ‘I was lernyd to take it to all my evyn cristen, alle in generalle and nothyng in specielle. Though oure lorde shewyd me that I shuld synne, by me aloone is vnderstonde alle’ (LT p 442.6ff). When in the tenth revelation Julian is shown the wound in Christ’s side, it is a ‘feyer and delectable place’, a ‘niche’ that is ‘large enow for alle mankynde that shalle be savyd’ (LT pp 394.6f).

But ‘mankynd that shalle be savyd’ is not just ‘evyn cristen’, it is not even just all mankind. It is all that is made and unmade:

And he that generally lovyth all his evyn cristen for god, he lovyth alle that is. For in mankynd that shall be savyd is comprehendyd alle, that is to sey alle that is made

and the maker of alle; for in man is god, and in god is alle. And he that lovyth thus,
he lovyth alle (LT p 322.9ff).

We saw that the ‘ovyr passynge’ reverent dread will shake *all* creatures, the earth and heaven itself (LT pp 682.40ff). She repeats this learning at the end of her revelations: ‘I saw that his menyng was for the generale man, that is to sey alle man [...] of whych man I am a membre’ (LT p 702.5ff).

As we will see in the following two chapters respectively, in the eighth revelation Christ identifies with the whole creation at his Passion, and in the fourteenth both with Adam who is everyman and with all the Earth. The niche of participative encounter into which Julian draws us is for all. Her wound of compassion, then, identifies her as everyman and her revelations are for everyman:

evry man, aftyr the grace that god gevyth hym in vnder standyng and lovyng,
receyve them in our lordes menyng (LT p 403.16f).

The ‘evyn cristen’ do not need to be thought of as fourteenth century people with fourteenth century ears, utterly different from my own, because the Julian of the text is addressing all ‘evyn cristen’, whoever and whenever they are: the niche that her texts give birth to stretches out in time and even when Julian is done, the book itself is ‘nott yett performyd’ (LT p 731.2f). The performative encounter continues in her readers, whoever and whenever they are. For my purposes, this means the category of ‘evyn cristen’ is at the very least porous to all, and quite possibly, in the end, inclusive of all, as Julian’s promise of a mighty ‘prevyte’ that God will in time ‘clerly show’ (LT p 430.2f) suggests. Reading Julian today places me, the reader of the text, among the ‘evyn cristen’, because the text is addressing me, whoever I am (I could be a Jew, for example). This point is not a theological claim that Julian was offering universal salvation ‘which Julian never declares’ (Windeatt 2016 p xxxvi) but that the niche of God’s love excludes nothing that is made. The invitation to performative porous interaction is, through Julian’s identification as everyman, to all. Julian, identified with her ‘evyn cristen’, is thus also identified as everyman.

Concluding summary

The wound of compassion has provided a broad category to explore Julian's porous subjectivity expressed in her participative interaction with others in her niche. I saw how her interactions with those in the room with her affected both her and her encounters with her revelations, and they became porous to the intermingled subjectivity of Julian and her readers, identified as her 'evyn cristen', from whom she becomes impossible to distinguish. I argued that her porous melting into the audience of her readers has the effect of engendering an active participative encounter between her reader-'evyn cristen' and the revelations. Julian's text has the lasting power to do this. Finally I argued that by 'evyn cristen' Julian means 'alle'; thus identifying herself and her reader as everyman.

IV) The Wound of Longing to God

Introductory

I am interpreting Julian's third wound of longing to God as that which sets the direction in which she faces, bringing her into encounter with Christ in her revelations and determining what she is looking for. 'Seeing' is, unsurprisingly, the most-used verb in her writing of her participative interaction with her revelations. In this section I explore how Julian's looking is performative and porous as it penetrates through the detail of what is seen to God; and I also explore her meditations on prayer, which for Julian is seeking and ultimately beholding God.

i) Looking

Looking is Julian's way of understanding. It is the test of veracity, as we saw in her struggles with the teaching of holy church on the one hand and the revelations on the other. If she sees something, even if it contradicts what she knows, she will not deny it, and if she does not see something, even if all that she has been taught makes her expect to see it, without denying what she has been taught,

she nevertheless admits to the truth that her not-seeing reveals. The asymmetry of the paradox which she retains in her niche then gives birth to new imaginative insights, as we saw in the subjective transformation of holy church, restored to its 'belonging-to' (Ricoeur 1977 p 24) in Christ.

As Guy Bourquin notes, mystics (for him Julian is a mystic) see visions in great detail. Like the medieval mystery plays, the detail of what is shown and seen is not merely a decorative addition but 'precious evidence of something mysteriously at work within the very process of writing' (Bourquin 1982 p 194). In each revelation Julian looks carefully at what she is shown, and finds its meaning in her seeing, not by developing proofs through argument, which is the Ricoeurian effect of poetic texts. She describes this method as being one that she was taught to use for the allegorical or 'example' revelation of the lord and the servant, which is the most mysterious to her, and the looking she is advised to undertake is very practical:

I had techyng inwardly as I shall sey: It longyth to the to take hede to alle the propertes and the condescions that were shewed in the example [...] I assented [...] seeing inwardly with avysement all the poyntes and the propertes that were shewed in the same tyme [...] at the manner of syttyng of the lorde and the place he satt on, and the coloure of his clothyng and the manner of shape, and his chere withoute and his nobley and his goodnes within; and the manner of stondyng of the seruannt, and the place where and how, and his manner of clothyng, the coloure and the shape, at his outwarde behavyng and at his inwarde goodnes and his vnlothfulnesse (LT pp 520.87ff).

Julian brings this exegetical practice to all her revelations (Watson 1992 p 97). It is by looking closely at exactly what is shown that the sense is revealed, the performative porous encounter is enacted and the new niche is created. Julian was 'watching with the greatest possible attention', says Bernadette Lorenzo (1982 p 171). 'The intensity of the scrutiny magnifies the minutest details', points out Bourquin, and the detail is the 'pregnant substitute for the ungraspable signatum'

(Bourquin 1982 p 194). Julian looks with a ‘pathological’ eye on the detail in order to meditate on it (Windeatt 2015 p xviii). The sense that is made is participative, not theoretical, and for the reader, the same detailed attention to the words of the text as Julian gives to her revelations is the performative interaction that can transform the self of the reader. Seeing is performative, both for Julian and for her attentive readers. From an enactivist point of view, ‘seeing’ is ‘action’, since perception is always already a ‘coordination’ with the agent’s environment (McGann 2015 p 21): on this account Julian ‘seeing’ her revelations, and the reader ‘seeing’ her text, create the niche in which performative interaction takes place. Other scholars comment on the participative effect of Julian’s way of seeing. Kevin Magill calls it ‘integrative perceptual’ (2006 p 78). As Marion Glasscoe has observed, Julian translates what she has seen into words rather than, as in *The Cloud of Unknowing*, for example, offering a manual for how to have a mystical experience. In so doing, Julian ‘closes the gap’ (Glasscoe 1993 p xv) between what Glasscoe calls knowing, but I would call seeing, and the language that expresses what is seen. Her words are not only ‘painterly’ (Baker 2005 p xii) but also ‘performyd’ (LT p 731.1f). They have ‘transformative materiality’, as Bourquin puts it (1982 p 194). Marion Glasscoe further elaborates: ‘the very process by which the words are understood may act as a metaphor for the experience to which they relate’ (Glasscoe 1993 p xix), referencing T.S. Eliot’s poetic demonstration that, like music, it is the form or pattern of words that reach the stillness, rather than the words by themselves. This is Davies’ insight (2017). The text re-enacts what Julian enacted, making possible the reader’s performative re-enactment of the porous encounter, all taking place through Julian’s and her reader’s ‘seeing’.

Seeing, for Julian, is an expression of her wound of longing to God: her ‘pathological’ looking at the detail of her revelations has a penetrative effect. As Merleau-Ponty recognised, it is the opaqueness of the material that signifies the presence beyond it: the exterior renders the ‘*ipse* nothing-that-I-am’ partially visible because it gives the ‘nothing-that-I-am’ an outline for others to see. The exterior that makes *ipse* partially visible also connects it back to the whole of Being (Merleau-Ponty 1968 p 63). Koubova’s experiment, predicated upon this insight, released the

creative 'inner excess' with the simple participative perception of the audience and the person in the performance space (Koubova 2015). In her first exploration of 'seeing', in the second revelation, Julian writes in detail of what she sees:

dyspyte, spytyng, solwyng and buffetyng, and manie languryng paynes, mo than I can tell, and offten chaungyng of colour. And one tyme I saw how halfe the face, begynnyng at the ere, over yede with drye bloud, tyll it closyd in to the myd face, and after that the other halfe beclosyd on the same wyse (LT pp 324.5ff).

Despite such minute detail being available to her — even the 'ere' — she desired more light because the vision was so dim. 'I saw him and sought him' (LT p 325.14), she writes: she knows there is more to see. She is answered in her reason: 'If god will shew thee more, he shal be thy light; thou nedyth none butt him' (LT p 325.11ff). She is reminded of a vision she had had in her earlier life of being underwater, and had understood then that 'if a man or woman wer there vnther the brode water, and he myght haue syght of god [...] he shoulde be safe in sowle and body, and take no harme' (LT p 326.21ff). 'Syght of god' brings protection. Although the seeing is of the material detail, the seeking is of God. She looks at the detail but by means of it she looks to God: an asymmetry that keeps the porous encounter active. Contemplative seeing, reverent dread, is always to God. The encounter in her revelations always takes Julian beyond the merely visible because she is looking, not over and above, but through, the detail of what she is shown, even the foul, tortured beauty of the dying Christ, towards God, as she discovers this same bloody Christ is her heaven in the eighth revelation.

Not seeing God is the cause of sorrow 'that servyth to synne' (LT p 496.21). Sin, as the fourteenth revelation shows Julian, is due to blindness. But she reflects that however much this may be so, and however much man may be blinded and prone to sin, the feeling of this was 'but lowe and small in regard of the grett desyer that the soule hath to se god' (LT p 497.24f). In her extended discourse on prayer, considered below, it becomes clear that 'seeking' is as important, and the same in God's eyes, as 'seeing', which is to say, seeking without seeing has the same force

(possibly another oblique reference to the biblical Thomas narrative). We already see the dynamic interactive tension of seeing and seeking in the second revelation, the asymmetry of ‘I saw him and sought him’. She understands, from this revelation, that we do not seek God ‘till what tyme that he of his goodnes shewyth hym to vs’ (LT p 325.15f), and it is this seeing ‘ought of hym’ that stirs us to ‘seke with great desyer to see hym more blessedfully’ (LT pp 325.16ff). Thus, she writes, ‘I saw him and sought him, and I had hym and wantyd hym; and this is and should be our comyn working in this life, as to my sight’ (LT p 326.18ff). Julian sees that she must seek, and this sustains her (and her reader) in an asymmetric and porous performative interaction with God.

In the same revelation, in understanding that ‘sekyng is as good as beholdyng’ (LT pp 332.74f), Julian also sees that the one quickens into the other: the habit of seeking penetrates through into beholding. ‘[I]t is gods will that we seke into the beholding of hym’ (LT p 333.76). Paul Janz’s enactive response to the command of grace resonates here. Our seeking into encounter with God is attentive, not cognitive (Janz 2009 p 9), and it pulls us into the unseen. Janz compares it to the desire for a drink: it is not the drink (which we can see) that we truly desire but the cessation of thirst (which we cannot see) (p 84). The desire calls us into performative response to the command of grace, and our subjectivity emerges from that (pp 174ff). Philip Sheldrake offers another resonant insight: that desire is ‘the *condition* of our openness to [...] the infinite’ (Sheldrake 2016 p 103, my italics).

Looking, then, for Julian, is porous, performative interaction as she steadfastly watches with the greatest possible attention all that she is shown, and through all that she is shown to God. She looks through the made to the unmade, because that is what she is looking for. This penetrative looking transforms her subjectivity as it quickens the revelations into life and ultimately into the creation of the new world of her text. The reader’s performative seeing of the text quickens it into creative life and transforms the reader’s subjectivity, which then sees differently: his *Gestell* subjectivity is undermined so that his looking, in Janz’s terms, ceases to be cognitive and

consequently exploitative, and becomes appetitive and consequently, as Janz brilliantly recognises, calls him into service: 'it demands sacrificial action in embodied life' (Janz 2009 p 175).

ii) Praying

In her seeing of prayer at the beginning of the fourteenth revelation, Julian understands further the dynamic performative dance between seeing and seeking. I include it in the category of the wound of 'longing to God' because it is both an expression of longing to God and also creates the 'wound' that brings about a longing to God. Prayer makes the soul, in Julian's language, 'suppull and buxom' (LT p 478.31). Prayer is habitual repetition, and works, whatever we may feel. Prayer is evoked through the asymmetry of the soul's need and through God's call and response and thus brings God's subjectivity into interactive performance as well as that of the soul. Prayer brings heaven *and* sensuality into Julian's niche. Prayer ones the soul to God and sometimes brings about an end to all seeking, leaving the supplicant simply and blissfully beholding.

The asymmetry that evokes the porous encounter of prayer is the soul feeling that it is 'temptyd, troblyde and lefte to her selfe by her vnrest' (LT p 478.30f); she is cut off from porous encounter and prayer makes her porous to encounter (LT pp 478.31ff). Prayer is evoked by the soul whose desire for God deepens and strengthens 'the more the soule seeth of god' (LT p 478.27); and also when she does not see God, who then feels 'nede and cause to pray' (LT p 478.28f). Rehearse the 'blessyd passion and his grett goodnes' (LT p 467.63f), enjoins Julian, and so the words will turn 'in to the soule and quyckynnyth the hart and entryth by hys grace in to tru werkyng' (LT p 467.64ff). The words of the Passion 'turnyth in to the soule' (LT p 467.64f), becoming affordances in the niche of prayer. The interactive porosity of the soul is expressed most beautifully as its becoming 'suppull and buxom' (LT p 478.31) to God. The effort comes to fruition as we 'enjoy in his louyng and delyghte in his goodnesse' (LT p 480.43f). The niche of prayer is deeply interior to the soul, whether the soul knows and feels it or not:

Pray interly, though the thyngke it savour the nott [...] though thou fele it nowght.

Pray interly, though thou fele nought, though thou se nought [...] for in dryenesse and barnesse, in sicknesse and in febelnes, than is thy prayer fulle plesannt to me, though thou thynk it saver the nott butt little (LT pp 464.42ff).

By this means all of one's life becomes prayer to God: 'And so is all thy lyvyng prayer in my syght' (LT p 465.47).

In the interactivity or 'werkynges' of longing and trust, God 'beholdyth vs continually' (LT p 473.60). It is the interactivity of our duty and his goodness that brings about the performative, enactive, porous encounter. The subject may feel nothing, but the bliss and goodness is there in God who beholds us continually, and our subjectivity is porous to that, as our 'wekenesse' and any 'doutfull dredys' (LT p 477.68f) are overcome by our steadfast practice and God's steadfast gaze. '[W]e do as we may [...] and alle that vs felyth we shalle it fynde in hym' (LT p 474.63ff).

Prayer is also thankfulness, which Julian calls 'a true inward knowyng' (LT p 466.56f); it is a continuous porosity maintained by seeing the utter dependence of creation upon God, as the 'little thing, the quantitie of an haselnott' had showed (LT pp 299.9ff). Thankfulness in turn keeps the soul in interactive porous subjectivity with God's subjectivity: 'turnyng oure selfe with alle oure myghtes in to the werkyng that oure lorde steryd vs to' (LT p 466.57f).

The niche of prayer includes all that is made, ourselves and the Earth. Julian writes of the importance of understanding the 'grounde' of our prayer, the ground where 'he wylle that we take oure stede and oure dwellynge' (LT p 470.31f). There are three aspects to this niche: first that we are excellently made, second that we are born again, and third that the whole creation is there to serve us:

The furst is our noble and excelent makyng, the seconde oure precious and derwurthy agayne beyng, the thyrde althyng that he hath made beneth vs to serue vs and for oure loue kepyth it (LT pp 470.34ff).

Julian would have us understand that God is responsible for everything, including our materiality. The asymmetry between God and us calls us to prayer: ‘that we se that he doth it, and we pray therefore’ (LT p 472.44f), and the inclusion of creation in the prayer-niche also dignifies materiality, as Barry Windeatt observes: our ‘sensory being’ (which is how he translates Julian’s ‘sensualite’) is kept together with ‘substance’ by means of God, according to Julian, ‘so that they shall never separate’ (Windeatt 2015 pp xxviiff). Materiality is in porous interaction with soul in Julian’s niche: ‘For I saw full suerly that oure substannce is in god, and also I saw that in oure sensuallite god is, for in the same poynt that oure soule is made sensuall, in the same poynt is the sytte of god’ (LT pp 566.22ff). The union of our substance and sensuality is located *in* God (Windeatt 2016 p xxxii).

The asymmetry that evokes prayer also comes from God’s longing, for God is ‘couetous to haue vs prayeng contynually’ (LT p 465.49). Julian sees that God is the ground of our praying: ‘it is my wyll that thou haue it, and sythen I make the to wyll it, and sythen I make the to beseke it’ (LT p 461.11ff). It follows that any goodness and grace that comes from our ‘beseeking’ is of God’s ‘propyr goodnesse’; it is not caused by our ‘beseeking’, and yet our ‘beseeking’ provokes the porous triadic encounter into performative interaction: through our ‘beseeking’ God makes himself beholden for each good deed that we do, even though he causes the goodness in the first place. We beseech him to do as he wills; he wills that we beseech; thus is the subjectivity of God and the soul brought into porous performative interaction, and the soul aligned, ‘acordyd’, with God (LT p 476.17).

The niche of prayer includes heaven. Julian writes that our prayer is received by Christ, who in turn ‘sendeth it vppe above, and setteth it in tresure wher it shall nevyr peryssch’ (LT p 463.34f). Prayer remains in continuous interactive performance in heaven: ‘It is ther before god with all hys holy seyntes, contynually receyvyd, evyr spedying oure nedys’ (LT p 463.35f). Prayer as the active performance in the niche transforms the soul into porous openness to the fullest bliss of heaven, giving it a ‘ryghtwys vnderstandyng’ through ‘tru longyng’ and ‘very trust’ (LT p 473.55f). The porousness of ‘trust’ comes from ‘trew vnderstondyng and loue with swete menyng’ (LT p 473.57f). The porousness of ‘tru longyng’ comes from ‘saworyng or seyng oure

blysse that we be ordeyned to' (LT p 473.56f), an experience that prayer sometimes evokes, when God reveals himself and all seeking is at an end. Then the the soul's longing overpasses all her imagining and all that she can work out or intend herself (LT p 480.40f); it is heightened until we 'dye in longing for loue' (LT p 481.49). Then Julian invites us into the niche of heaven to savour God:

and than shall we alle come in to oure lorde, oure selfe clerely knowyng and god
fulsomly hauyng, and we endlesly be alle hyd in god, verely seyeng and fulsomly
felyng, and hym gostely heryng, and hym delectably smellyng, and hym swetly
swelwyng (LT p 481.49ff).

The niche of prayer could be said to be the ultimate restoration of the Ricoeurian 'belonging-to' (Ricoeur 1977 p 24) of the self. It 'onyth the soule to God', restored by grace, however much it is 'ofte vnlike in condescion' (LT p 475.3f). Prayer becomes a witness, sees Julian, that the soul is aligned with God, its will is God's will, and prayer softens the soul so that it becomes porous to the grace that restores the alignment. And so there comes a time when all 'beseking' ceases, because God of his goodness chooses to show himself to our soul:

then we se nott for the tyme what we shulde more pray, but all oure entent with alle
oure myghtys is sett hoole in to the beholdyng of hym (LT p 477.19ff).

The triadic encounter is resolved because 'beholdyng' is no longer of subject soul to object God but all one seeing of that which is mysteriously not seeable: it is 'hygh vnperceyvable prayer', and we are 'onyd in to the syght and the beholdyng of him to whom we pray' (LT p 477.21ff). The niche of prayer is the soul finally fulfilled and satisfied as nothing less than God can ever satisfy: unlike the 'little thing, the quantitie of an haselnott' (LT p 299.9) which is made, his unmade 'fulsom goodnesse fulfyllyth all our myghtys' (LT p 479.37f). Encounter with that which is made is not generative of new niches, it will not last, because the soul which is one in kind with God will never be satisfied with it, and nor will it engender porous response. Encounter with that which is unmade is constantly creative of surprising new worlds. Our 'meke continuall' prayer engendered by his

‘swete grace’ means that we ‘come in to hym’ in this life by ‘many prevy touchynges of swete gostly syghtes and felyngs’ (LT p 480.45ff), like continuous gentle wounds that keep us in lively porous encounter.

Prayer, then, in Julian, is a demonstration of the post-Ricoeurian triadic encounter of porous self in performative interaction with God, giving rise to new niches. The soul is already one in kind with God, but she does not feel it is so, and so God stirs in her the need to pray. She responds out of duty or a longing for sight of God, with tastes of which he has ‘softened’ her many times, awakening her ‘ghostly’ senses, and her prayer is partly savouring these tastes of God, partly just habitual rehearsal of the teaching of holy church in repeating the story of the Passion, but all the time making herself ‘suppull and buxom’, soft and obedient, hence porous, to God who covets her prayer. Her subjectivity is being transformed, whether the soul feels it or not. She has only to turn her eyes towards God, as it were, and even if her eyes are blinded and we ‘se nott’ (LT p 472.45) her intention and duty is towards God and she continually ‘besekes’ him. Sometimes the seeing clears and she ceases all ‘beseking’ simply to behold her God who is forever satisfying to her, with whose own steadfast beholding of her she is now aligned, so that there is no subject-object divide, and only one looking.

Concluding summary

The third wound of longing to God has provided a context for my exploration of Julian’s ‘seeing’ and ‘praying’. Seeing for Julian is the performative means by which the self is wounded and opened to transformation by porous interaction with that which it gazes upon, in the greatest possible detail, looking always through what is made to God who is unmade. Praying is both seeking and also beholding, and both performative interactions are the same in God’s eyes. God himself participates porously: he covets our prayers as we covet him. Our sensual being is caught up in the interaction of prayer within the niche of God.

Conclusion: Julian's wounds are her porosity

God visits us of his special grace with the three wounds of contrition, compassion, and true longing to God, says Julian, so that we are delivered of all sin and pain, and are taken up into bliss and made even with the saints. Contrition makes us clean, compassion makes us ready, and true longing to God makes us worthy. The wounds are the means: they make the soul porous to heaven.

Contrition, compassion and longing to God are wounds and they are also medicine, which cleans and heals the wounds, transforming them into worship (LT pp 451.21ff). This is Julian's language, and in this chapter I have sought to draw out themes in the text that resonate with her concept of wound, itself so resonant with the post-Ricoeurian triad of porous or wounded interaction between reader and text or Julian and her revelations giving birth to new worlds. Thus Julian's contrition ensures her subjectivity is porous: she will not draw attention to herself and she remains impossible to categorise as teacher, theologian or even mystic. Her contrition is born of her learning from holy church, whose teaching she will not betray and whose subjectivity itself becomes porous because of her determined inclusion of it in the niche of her revelations. Her compassion is shown in her interaction and identification with the people immediately surrounding her in her sickroom and then extending to her 'evyn cristen', a category so inclusive that she can with integrity call herself everyman. Julian's wound of longing to God is enacted through her constant, steady learning through looking that is oriented towards God, and her prayer that is so directed.

Relating Julian's Wounds to the Twenty-First Century Ecological Challenge

I have argued that the cause of the ecological crisis facing the twenty-first century is the enslavement to *Gestell* that has bound humanity's subjectivity and given rise to the objectivising exploitation of nature that has done such harm. The ecological challenge is not to find more technological solutions to climate change, destruction of habitat and biodiversity loss, but to release our subjectivity from its buffered enslavement to *Gestell* and restore its ancient, in Taylorian terms, and originary, in Schilbachian terms, porosity.

Julian's embodiment and enactment of woundedness offer an example of porosity and they also invite her reader, through the intimate power of her language, to be summoned and transformed into wounded porosity himself. The move is a theological one but not in the sense that Julian has constructed theological arguments for a porous subjectivity to save the planet by which we may or may not be persuaded. Julian's writing manifests truth by poetry, in Ricoeur's terms: it does not demonstrate it by argument. Just as she interacts with her revelations, allowing them to summon and change her self whom her asked-for wounds have already made porous, so her reader is invited to interact with her text, allowing it to summon him and change him. His willingness to be summoned is his awakening to porosity, the first stirrings of the slave who seeks to escape captivity from a *Gestell* subjectivity. If the foregoing study has demonstrated that this is so — and for consistency the demonstration must be experienced in real-time reading, not as a theory — then it has gone some way to answering my thesis question positively.

The following are some specific observations from each of the sections of study of the Julian texts. These are not conclusive but rather indicative of how our subjectivity, if we have chosen Julian as our means of escape from *Gestell* and our restoration to porosity, might then embody a new ecological consciousness and inhabit a new ecological niche.

We learned from the passages on woundedness that porosity is the state in which transformation of heart and behaviour becomes possible. The technological self is able to be transformed if it is open and receptive. The implication from Julian, however, is that porosity has to be asked for and received as a gift; that is to say, it requires recognition of a giver. In Julian's case this is God. For a deep ecologist like Arne Naess (2016) or an environmental writer like Michael McCarthy (2010, 2015) it might be nature itself. It is an openness to a greater other at which we can wonder. Wound and wonder are very close, so our wonderment can reveal our woundedness. Wonder will also help to ensure that the woundedness is received as a gift, with the readiness to learn that it implies. It is not difficult to wonder at the Earth, and the universe in which it floats suspended, if we take the time to look at it and understand it. Julian also indicates that our

woundedness has to be sustained. Our porous subjectivity is not an initial impulse into enquiry that then leaves us, but a way of being in and with the world. Like the Arosi people whom Michael Scott studied (2014), we have to wonder at the Earth and *stay* wondering. Sheldrake points to the wounded Christ as an ‘important icon of the risen life’ (Sheldrake 2016 p 112), a ‘perfectly liminal state’ (p 103).

From the passages that defined, or rather failed to define, Julian’s subjectivity, we have a pedagogic example of a non-*Gestell* self, one that is summoned to her revelations and ready to learn and be changed by them. Julian’s self-negation points to an ethic which allows the other: like Simone Weil’s definition of prayer as attention in which the question ‘what are you going through?’ is asked by one who has emptied her soul in order to see the other, ‘in all his truth’ (Weil 1951/2001 p 65). So the twenty-first century self empties itself in order to see the Earth and its needs. In such a way we might present ourselves to the Earth, as it were, in order to learn from it rather than to make use of it. Wise husbandry does this, attending to the rhythms and patterns of soil, weather and water, supplicating the Earth for our food and shelter rather than dominating it.

From the ‘holy chyrch’ passages we learn the generative power of paradox held non-adversarially and interactively in a niche. This delicate art of not damaging important but incoherent principles, policies or practices as they jostle for their place in our twenty-first century world, and seeing what hitherto unthought-of possibilities emerge from their interactive proximity, may be important as we wrestle with competing moral imperatives in facing the ecological crisis, such as the imperative to feed our families today and the imperative to ensure the Earth remains healthy enough to feed the families of tomorrow.

From the ‘reuerente drede’ passages we can understand the power of contemplation with which it is associated. Contemplation as, for example, Evelyn Underhill (1915/2000) has described it, involves the reverent observation of anything at all ‘from Alp to insect’ (p 48). The effect of such loving contemplation is to dissolve boundaries between oneself and that which is being

contemplated.⁶⁹ Julian's attitude of reverent dread has the same quality: it makes love active in connecting the one contemplating and the object of contemplation which ceases to be 'object' under her loving gaze. Such an activation would change perception and hence behaviour towards the planet.

From the reflection on Julian's sickroom companions we can draw an indication of the nature of response to the challenge. When the problem seems huge, and everyone needs to be involved in addressing it, one starts with one's immediate neighbours; but one does not stop with them.

Julian's subjectivity as everyman, drawing all that is made into the niche of her revelations, reiterates her insight that there is nothing made that God does not love: indeed without God's love there would be nothing, because that love is what gives and sustains existence. If all of creation is loved by God, 'there is nowhere called away where we can throw things'.⁷⁰

The passages that indicate that the reader is part of everyman establish the foundational social interconnectedness and interdependence recognised by a Taylorian account of history, modern enactivist science and in the post-Ricoeurian triadic encounter. For our ecological ethic, it points to a recognition of the universalisability of personal responsibility and also of unselfishness, the recognition both that my actions have their ongoing effect like ripples in the lake of the cosmos which, once created, never cease, and also that actions undertaken selfishly are in no one's interests, including my own. It means that I am drawn in to Julian's 'unperformyd' work; involved in the primary process of giving birth to new worlds, of imagining hitherto unimaginable selves. Out of this primary possibility comes the recognition that there may be a way of making our habitat or niche in Earth without harming it, even though we have not seen that way, yet.

⁶⁹ So that St Francis was being 'accurate as well as charming' when he referred to Brother Wind and Sister Water (Underhill 1915/2000 p 48).

⁷⁰ A saying that has entered ecological lore and has even been used by Shell as part of an advertising campaign. I first heard it cited by Sally Bingham at a conference in Kathmandu, 2001.

From Julian's steadfast looking that sees every detail and through the detail to God because, as I argued, it arises from and is oriented by her wound of longing to God, we can learn the power of watching with the greatest possible attention. Wisdom emerges in looking porously at and thus learning from the thing seen: not away from the thing seen. Julian's way of looking is, to use Janz's categories, appetitive rather than cognitive. For our twenty-first century ecological consciousness, cognitive looking is to be rejected because it will lead to exploitation, whereas appetitive or attentive looking, which we should choose, will lead to interactive encounter: the looking is beyond and therefore performatively through porous encounter. If our looking stops where a thing materially stops, the triadic encounter dies and new worlds are stillborn. Our looking as Julian looks will 're-enchant' nature, in the Taylorian sense (2007 eg pp 35, 74, 85, 98, 553). Our appetitive encounter leads to service, not exploitation: 'sacrificial action in embodied life' (Janz 2009 p 175).

The challenging proposition from the prayer-revelations is that the porous triadic encounter that is productive of new selves and worlds is only productive when God energises the encounter. Simply attending to 'what is made' without attending also to 'what is unmade' will produce stillborn worlds and leave the self buffered and unchanged. It is Evelyn Underhill's contention, which the Koubova experiment also implies, that attentive contemplation of anything that is made will bring about this encounter with what is unmade, because it lies just behind it. The implication is that such looking will bring God into emergent play in the encounter, given the chance. Julian's God is 'covetous' of our prayers, as Philip Sheldrake notices (Sheldrake 2016 p 28). Prayer makes seeing what is beyond intentional and by means of it what is material is known also to be 'ghostly': the Earth is, in Taylor's terms, re-enchanted.

The recognition in the prayer revelations of God as the ground of all being, as the creator of all that is made, engenders thankfulness and humility, both of which responses are essential to an ecological consciousness that does not exploit but rather receives and understands before acting.

This way of seeing is challenging even to religious twenty-first century ears because it feels like a renunciation of responsibility: but that is what is needed if the *Gestell* self is to be transformed.

The ecological consciousness that emerges from a porosity learned from Julian's wounds can be summarised as one which empties itself of its own concerns and priorities, simply contemplating the Earth or an aspect of the Earth, allowing boundaries to dissolve, allowing the underlying interdependence and relationality to rise to the surface and be seen and acknowledged, allowing the attentive looking to penetrate through (not over) what is made to what is unmade. From that steady, contemplative, prayerful looking emerges wonder at what is; thankfulness for it as gift; recognition that every part of it is loved by God; humility in the recognition of the beauty and wisdom it manifests; and sense of responsibility towards it and each other, experienced as service, not control.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Eighth Revelation

Introduction

This chapter will study the eighth revelation in detail using the post-Ricoeurian framework, seeking to emphasise how the Julian of the text is in powerful interactive, porous, performative encounter with the last moments of the Passion, which transforms her subjectivity, and, I suggest, by the communicative power of the language she uses, that of her reader too. The eighth revelation, longer and more complex than those that have gone before, has Julian encountering and being changed by the dying Christ upon the crucifix her curate holds before her eyes. Julian experiences Christ's transforming, dying body through death into new life porously and performatively as she undergoes the pains of the Passion herself. Through her experience, Christ's transformation comes into porous encounter with all. The eighth revelation reveals a Christ that is identified with the whole cosmos and the world Julian expresses through language is as all encompassing as a photograph of planet Earth could (or should) make our world. In identifying with his pain and not looking away from it, asserting that this Christ who is dying on the Cross is her heaven, Julian creates a niche that is as much within her as it is within Christ. But she has to travel, as it were, into the revelation; she has to follow Ricoeur in taking no 'short cuts' (Ricoeur 1990 p 48). She nearly stops short, because of regretting her wish to experience Christ's pains, but chooses to stay with the Christ-on-the-Cross, and so journeys with him from death into life, a mysterious and hidden transformation that she nevertheless fully participates in because, having so chosen, she remains in intense and porous encounter with him. Time is an important affordance in the niche of the revelation, seeming to stretch into 'sennyght' (LT p 358.25), and so is place, from the focussed point of the crucifix itself to the cosmos that it ends up encompassing. Thus the eighth revelation has many subjectivity-changing, niche-creating features that bear analysis using the post-Ricoeurian approach. I will study the revelation in order, as it is recounted in the text, and quote extensively from it, using the post-Ricoeurian lens to focus on its capacity to restore the porosity of the reader. In this way I

hope, again, to demonstrate that the thesis question, of whether the Julian texts can address the cause of the ecological crisis by transforming our subjectivity and restoring its porosity, can be answered positively. I additionally offer some proposals for an ecological consciousness derived from a Julian-led porosity at the end.

I will study the revelation in order, as follows: i) in the revelation immediately preceding the eighth, in what turns out to be important preparation for it, Julian writes of her experience of changing, some twenty times, between a wonderful surety without pain in her soul and then a deep heaviness and weariness, doing nothing herself to deserve either state; ii) she then moves into the eighth revelation, describing the last moments of the Passion which seem to last a week, not a few hours; iii) the Philippians II quotation that speaks of feeling as Christ feels, only in ST; iv) Julian's own experience of the pains of Christ, which are so bad that she repents of ever having made her youthful request to experience them; v) her mother's attempt to close her eyes, thinking she had died, only in ST; vi) the pain Julian feels that turns into the pain that Mary felt; vii) the pain Julian feels that turns into the pain of the whole cosmos, both those who loved Christ and those who did not know him at all; viii) Julian's temptation to look away from the crucifix and up to heaven, her choice not to and her reflections on this choice; ix) the very last moments of Christ's dying and his ability to suffer so much more than ordinary humankind, because of the Godhead in him; x) the transition from death into life that takes place while Christ is still on the Cross. I conclude with some tentative proposals for ecology from each section of the text I have studied, as with the previous chapter.

i) Twenty disconcerting alternations

In the revelation described immediately prior to the eighth revelation, Julian experiences strong alternate emotions, changing from one to the other 'I suppose about twenty tymes' (LT p 355.17f). First she knows a sureness without pain: a 'sovereyne gostely lykyng in my soule [...] everlasting suernessee, myghtely fastnyd withoutt any paynefulle drede' (LT p 354.3ff) and then she feels

utterly weary and bereft: 'left to my selfe in hevynes and werynes of my life and irkenes of my selfe' (LT p 354.8f). She makes the transition from one state to the other so quickly that she cannot infer any goodness in herself to cause the 'gostly lykyng' nor any sin that she may have committed to cause the 'irkenes'. There simply was not time. Julian's subjectivity is disconcerted in the face of its inexplicable experience, finding itself changing in ways of which it cannot make sense, neither Julian nor, in turn, the reader, who, drawn by the power of the text, empathetically experiences her changing by means of the clarity and forthrightness of her description. Even if the reader manages to withhold disbelief, she still cannot make sense of what is happening to Julian, or why. Julian's state changes not through her own merit or fault. Her willingness to accept that familiar explanations of culpability are not valid allows a porous openness to other possibilities.

The niche of this revelation is Julian herself, the states she experiences are states of her own body and soul. There is porosity in the internal interactive encounter, in that the 'sovereigne gostly lykyng' Julian attributes to God, the 'hevynes and werynes' to being left alone. Julian is in porous encounter with God himself, who appears to be a dynamic and disconcerting presence and withdrawal within her. Julian's state of mind changes with the movement, not through her own volition but by the encounter. The post-Ricoeurian triad is found in Julian's self, its encounter with the God who grants her soul's ease, and in the form of the strange, changing states for which she cannot claim responsibility, located within her body and soul. The text that emerges from the dynamic niche constructed in Julian herself describes her as open to new encounters and worlds. What she understands and articulates is that God's gift of 'gostly lykyng' is freely given, and that it lasts, whereas the 'hevynes and werynes' passes. The revelation prepares Julian for the wrenching experience of what is to follow, where she will be called to enter into and experience the Passion of Christ, so powerfully that she will regret ever having asked for it, and where God's 'sovereigne gostly lykyng' seems to withdraw from the whole cosmos. Julian's summoned self is made wounded and porous but also stronger by this preparation for the more deeply transformative and interactive experience of the Passion. Here she identifies with Paul and Peter:

And in the tyme of joy I myght haue seyde with seynt Paule: Nothyng shalle
departe me fro the charyte of Crist; and in the payne I myght haue sayd with seynt
Peter: Lorde, saue me, I peryssch (LT p 355.18ff);

soon she will identify with Christ himself.

ii) The dying, drying Christ

The eighth revelation then begins with Julian observing closely Christ's Passion:

After thys Crist shewde a parte of hys passyon nere his dyeng (LT p 357.3).

From the text, we know that Julian has her eyes fixed on the crucifix being held before them, having stopped trying to look upwards towards heaven, which was more difficult and painful in her feverish state:

[My curatte] set the crosse before my face, and sayd: I haue brought the image of
thy sauour; looke ther vpon and comfort thee ther with. My thought I was well, for
my eyen was sett vpriht into heauen, where I trusted to come by the mercie of
god; but nevertheles I ascentyd to sett my eyen in the face of the crucefixe, if I
might, and so I dide, for my thought I might longar dure to looke even forth then
right vp (LT p 291.22ff).

This attitude will become critical to the meaning and effect of the revelation. We can picture Julian propped up in bed, herself dying, as she and all about her believe, watching the revelation of Christ's death. Her physical state mirrors that of the Christ she is shown on the Cross and the interactivity is thus already powerfully in process, the location now widened outwards from within Julian herself (in the seventh revelation) to her sick room and the figure raised in the bed facing the crucifix held before her eyes. The curate holding the crucifix so steadily in place is, as we saw, both a silent Koubovian witness and an armature for the crucifix and hence an essential affordance in the

niche, as described by Laroche (2015) and McGann (2015), albeit in the darkness that surrounds the Cross which is self-effulgent:

it waxid as darke aboute me in the chamber as if it had ben nyght, saue in the image
of the crosse, wher in held a comon light; and I wiste not how' (LT p 291.28ff).

As the revelation proceeds the location of the porous encounter closes in on the Cross itself. The curate's crucifix is the locus of the revelation, suffused with Julian's imagination, and so the niche of the performative encounter includes Julian herself and the dying Christ she is shown, as though Julian's subjectivity has moved into the place where the crucifix is: where, for her, Christ is.

The experience of the Passion is brought alive for the reader by its focus upon the drying of Christ's flesh; this particularity greatly increases the porous response as Julian's *ipse* self is summoned to attend to the dying, drying Christ, and we in turn are too. The dreadful changes and intense pain of Christ's body are described with a detail that manages to be both tender and 'painterly' (Baker 2005 p xii). Julian's text avoids being morbidly fixated upon the foul details while at the same time giving them her full attention. The lack of morbidity comes, perhaps, from the intense interest Julian shows, and her readers share, in what is happening. Julian's attention is on the activity of the dying, drying flesh.⁷¹ This interactive engagement in Julian's description shows her entering into the movement of the Passion, rather than the image of it: she writes of the changes in Christ's body. Julian's involved description brings her and us into performative encounter, the changing colours creating a porosity in the vision:

I saw the swete face as it were drye and blodeles with pale dyeng and deede pale,
langhuryng and than turned more deede in to blew, and after in browne blew, as the
flessch turned more depe dede (LT p 357.3ff).

Windeatt cites this relative colouring and contrast of the changing shades of blue as an example of Julian's visions being 'both fervently compassionate and yet also dispassionately analytical' (2016 p xxviii), which is why perhaps there is no descent into sentimentality, while at the same time we are

⁷¹ Watson and Jenkins note that typical medieval accounts of the Passion reflect on it as a static image (2006 p 178).

drawn so closely and tenderly into the revelation ourselves. The focus of the Passion, for Julian, closes in on his face and then even more closely on his lips:

For his passion shewde to me most propyrly in his blessyd face, and namely in hys
lyppes. Ther in saw I these iiij colours: tho that were be fore fressch and rody,
lyuely and lykyng to my syght (LT p 357.6ff).

Julian mourns the change in the lips. Her choice is striking, but again, her interest and focus are not on the lips themselves but the changes they go through. The reader follows her, as Popova (2015) would express it, hearing and interacting in turn with a narrative voice that brings the reality of the dying body home by focusing on detailed changes so that the reader feels as involved as Julian is. The involvement is painful: the pain crosses from Christ to the one seeing, as the pain of the Passion and the pain of seeing circle around the ‘changing’ figure on the Cross. The seer changes as the seen changes, creating porous subjectivity; but the energy of the encounter is pain. Thus Julian and her reader porously interact with the pain of the Passion:

This was a peynfulle chaungyng, to se this depe dying, and also hys nose clongyn to
geder and dried to my syght; and the swete body waxid browne and blacke, alle
chaungyd and turned oughte of the feyer fressch and lyuely coloure of hym selfe in
to drye dyeng (LT p 357.9ff).

Julian’s eye lingers on the lips and nose and then extends its gaze to include the body, all changing colour, drying and dying. The niche incorporates more context as Julian’s perspective widens further, connecting the dryness within with the cold and dryness without as she saw, with an imaginative eye, the elements of wind and cold that buffeted the figure on the Cross. The niche in time and space is now Christ’s body in which her imagination is performing, a body worked upon and tortured within and without:

For that same tyme that oure blessyd sauour dyed vpon the rode, it was a dry
sharp wynd, wonder colde as to my syght; and what tyme that the precyous blode
was bled out of the swete body that myght passe ther fro, yet ther was a moyster in

the swete flessch of Crist as it was shewde. Blodlessehed and payne dried with in,
and bloowyng of the wynde and colde comyng from with out, mett to geder in the
swete body of Christ; and thesse iiij dried the flessch of Crist by prosses of tyme
(LT p 358.13ff).

Colledge and Walsh suggest that the 'wynd' was inspired by John 18:18,⁷² and that it was a common feature of medieval literature of the Passion (Colledge and Walsh 1978 p 358.14 fn), but Watson and Jenkins disagree, citing only the *Privity* which notes that 'the wedire was colde', and imagine, rather, the historical Julian feeling the easterly winds blowing off the North Sea across East Anglia on Good Fridays (Watson and Jenkins 2006 p 178). Windeatt cites a carol of c 1500 which refers to the cold wind.⁷³ My concern is not historical but with the niche constructed by Julian as she identifies four affordances of cold and wind from without and drying blood and pain from within Christ's body. The niche constructed is internal and external: it is Christ's Passion, located in his body and in Julian, utterly material, particular, porous to the world without and interacting with it from within.

In the next passage, while the 'spirits' in Christ's flesh are dried up by pain, nevertheless the 'spirit' in Christ's flesh extended the dying, playing its part in the 'joint behaviour' (McGann 2015 p 24) that constructs the niche and introduces a temporal affordance: time extended to feel like a week:

And thowe this peyne was bitter and sharp, yet it was fulle longe lastyng, as to my
syght. And the payne dryede vppe alle the lyuely spyrites of Cristes flessch. Thus I
saw the swete flessch dry in my syght, parte after perte dryeng with mervelous
payne. And as long as any spryte hadd lyffe in Cristes flessch, so longe sufferde he.
This long peyne semyde to me as if he had be sennyght deede, dyeng at the poynt
of out passyng, alwey sufferyng the gret peyne (LT p 358.20ff).

⁷² 'Now the slaves and the police had made a charcoal fire because it was cold'.

⁷³ 'There blows a colde wynd todaye, todaye, / The wynd blows cold todaye / Cryst sufferyd his passyon for manys salvacyon / To kype the cold wynd awaye' (Windeatt 2016 p 210).

Julian is careful to ensure her account does not stray from the Gospel account, in clarifying that the ‘sennyght’ was a seeming, not a reality (Windeatt 2016 p 210):

And ther I say it semyd as he had bene sennyght deed, it specyfyeth that the swet
body was so dyscolouryd, so drye, so clongyn, so dedly and so pytuous as he had
bene sennyght deed, contynually dyeng. And me thought the dryeng of Cristes
flessch was the most peyne and the last of his Passion (LT p 359.26ff)

but in so doing she emphasises all the more the niche of the revelation of the Passion her words are creating. She will later return to this seemingly endless suffering, understanding that Christ’s spirit could withstand the pain and experience its own flesh dying longer than any other soul could, because it was the Godhead. The drawn-out process is described as an artist might: Julian lingers upon, but does not morbidly wallow in, what she sees. The niche that is created by Christ enduring the experience of his body’s deterioration into decay is one in which Julian and her reader are held with Christ in agony, suspended, a moment of dying stretched beyond imaginable suffering, an awakesness to the moment of dying, which of course Julian is actually experiencing materially herself in her own dying body. It is drawn out further and the internal aspects of the niche are emphasised as Julian reflects next on the scriptural account in John 19:28 of Christ’s thirst:

And in this dryeng was brought to my mynde this worde that Crist seyde: I thirst.
For I sawe in Crist a dowbylle thirst, oon bodely and a nother gostly. This worde
was shewyd for the bodyly thurst and for the gostely thirst was shewyd as I shalle
sey after; and I vnderstode by the bodyly thurst that the body had feylyng of
moyster, for the blessyde flessch and bonys was lefte alle aloone without blode and
moyster (LT p 360.1ff).

Thirst, then, is both internal and external, joining forces in the construction of the niche of the Passion whose principal feature is dryness. The blood which flowed so plenteously is now dried, discoloured and obscuring. Julian has earlier almost rejoiced in the flow of blood from the crucifix in her fourth revelation, which should have soaked her bed: ‘it shulde haue made the bedde all on

bloude, and haue passyde over all about' (LT p 343.11f), and she compares it favourably to water, of which she says:

Then cam to my mynde god hath made waters plentuous in erth to our servys, and
to our bodely eese, for tendyr loue that he hath to vs. But yet lykyth hym better that
we take full holsomly hys blessyd blode to wassch vs of synne; for ther is no lycour
that is made that lykyth hym so wele to yeue vs (LT p 343.13ff).

The flowing blood is life-giving as flowing water is, a porous interpenetration of 'ghostly' and material. Now, however, the life-giving blood is dried and caked on Christ's dying, drying body. The life-giving blood that, in the fourth revelation, had washed away sin and had so plenteously flowed, is in the eighth revelation dried up, as though it, like the rest of creation described later in the same revelation, freezes into immobility and stops its life-giving function for the timeless moment of the Passion. It could be said to have become non-porous. In niches of revelations that take place before and after this one, (for example the fourth and the tenth revelations) the flowing blood was the energy that brought about porosity between Christ and Julian and her reader; for the time of this revelation, the time of Christ's Passion, the only thing that flows is pain: pain, not blood, energises the interaction in the niche.

Julian goes on describing in careful detail the loosening of the flesh as the thorns detach it from the bone.⁷⁴ Her detailed account draws the reader ever more closely into the experience of the Passion as her way of seeing means she and the reader enter into and journey with the Passion, so that the joint behaviour and interaction becomes more intense and performatively part of the niche that is being created: the Cross, the Christ figure, his internal and external suffering, the words Julian uses to describe the flesh, the reader following the words with breathless intensity, culminating in Julian's cry 'I wolde nott for my life haue seen it fall' (LT p 362.27f). The

⁷⁴ There is some evidence, cited by Watson and Jenkins and also Windeatt, of a tradition within medieval accounts of the Passion of Christ having extremely tender flesh, found in Bridget of Sweden (Watson and Jenkins 2006 p 180) and Richard Rolle (Windeatt 2016 p 211). Julian's 'I vnderstode', rather than 'I saw' implies she is referring to a tradition in which the harm the nails and the thorns would have done would be greater on Christ's body than on any other.

description is cited in full because it conveys the momentum of the dynamic performance in the niche, woven out of movement, whose energy is pain, and the only way for the reader to make sense of and be transformed by Julian's porosity is to follow her language with the same close attention with which Julian 'reads' the body of Christ:

The blessyd body dried alle a loon long tyme, with wryngyng of the nayles and weyght of the body; for I vnderstode that for tendyrnes of the swete handes and the swete feet by the grete hardnes and grevous of the naylys, the woundys waxid wyde, and the body satylde for weyght, by long tyme hangyng and persyng and rasyng of the heed and byndyng of the crowne alle bakyn with drye blode, with the swet here clyngyng the drye flessch to the thornys, and the thornys to the flessch dryeng. And in the begynnyng, whyle the flessch was fressch and bledyng, the contynualle syttyng of the thornes made the woundes wyde. And ferthermore I saw that the swete skynne and the tendyr flessch with the here and with the blode was alle rasyd and losyde aboue with the thornes and brokyn in many pecis, and were hangyng as they wolde hastely haue fallen downe whyle it had kynde moyster. How it was goone I saw nott, but I vnderstode that it was with the sharpe thornes and the boystours grevous syttyng on of the garlonde, not sparyng and without pytte, that all tho brake the swet skynne with the flessch, and the here losyd it from the boone. Wher thorow it was broken on pecys as a cloth, and saggyng downwarde, semyng as it wolde hastely haue fallen for heuynes and for lowsenes. And that was grete sorow and drede to me, for me thought that I wolde nott for my life haue seen it fall (LT pp 360.8ff).

There is a dreadful irony, as Watson and Jenkins observe (2006 p 180), in the flesh 'saggyng' like a cloth for Julian, who uses the metaphor of clothing many times⁷⁵ as an evocation of the porous subjectivity of Christ to her 'evyn cristen'. Like the blood which was life giving and is now dried,

⁷⁵ eg p 299.3ff; throughout the fourteenth revelation which I study in the following chapter; see also pp 563.21ff; 572.23ff; 580.47ff; 640.8f.

the flesh of Christ is now useless and helpless. It had clothed us: 'for loue wrappeth vs and wyndeth vs, halseth vs and all becloseth vs, hangeth about vs for tender loue, that he may never leeue us (LT p 299.5ff). The niche of the Passion is effecting a revolution in the affordances that had been and meant one thing and now become something else, their meaning shifting in performative interaction with the energy of pain and the spreading dryness.

The process of drying and dying continues with Julian's detailed description of the crown of thorns creating a terrible poetic beauty of concentric circles of thorns, blood and flesh; of the colour brown spreading as the dryness spreads, 'lyke a drye bord when it is agyd, and the face more browne than the body' (LT p 363.36f). The drying has four features: bloodlessness, pain, hanging like a cloth in the wind, and unslaked thirst. The intensity of the description, which grows as Julian herself moves closer and closer to the heart of it, descends into inarticulacy, not the Marian mystical silence of the unsayable (Caputo and Scanlon 1999) but a kind of despair that there are not enough words for what she saw:

A, hard and grevous was that payne; but much more harder and grevous it was when the moystur fayled, and all began to drye, thus clyngyng. Theyse were ij paynes that shewde in the blyssed hed. The furst wrought to the dryeng whyle it was moyst, and that other slow with clyngyng and dryeng, with blowyng of wynde fro without, that dried hym more and payned with colde than my hart can thingke, and all other peynes, for which paynes I saw that alle is to lytylle that I can sey, for it may nott be tolde (LT p 364.41ff).

The skin and flesh are moving: they are in danger of falling from the body altogether. The thorns seem to be tearing at the flesh as Julian watches, as though they had a life or intention of their own. Above all the pain that drives the movement of the interaction is fuelled by dryness. Christ's body is in destructive interaction with the affordances of the Passion and Julian's 'watching with the greatest possible attention' (Lorenzo 1982 p 171) draws her and us into the performance.

iii) *The Philippians quotation*

A passage of scripture, a direct translation with the same syntax as that of the Vulgate, is in ST but not in LT. Whereas in LT Julian lapses into the silence of ‘it maye nott be tolde’, in ST she goes on to tell it through St Paul, that each soul should *feel in him* that in Christ Jesus.

Swilke paynes I sawe that alle es to litelle that y can telle or saye, for itt maye
nought be tolde [the LT passage ends here; ST continues:] botte ylke saule aftere
the sayinge of saynte Pawle schulde feele in hym that in Christe Jhesu. This
schewynge of Criste paynes fillyd me fulle of paynes, for I wate weele he suffrede
nought botte aney, botte as he walde schewe yt me and fylle me with mynde as I
hadde desyrede before (ST p 234.23ff).

Julian’s translation is the exact syntax of the Vulgate’s *hoc enim sentite in vobis quod et in Christo Jesu*. Whatever the reason for the quotation’s absence in the LT it is entirely apt for my interpretation of the niche that has been constructed, in which Julian and Christ are in participative interaction. Julian’s subjectivity is changing by means of this; she feels as Christ feels; like Paul, hers is an ‘impassioned attachment that unhinges the coordinates of pre-established identity’, as Ward Blanton puts it, writing of Breton’s Paul (Breton 2011 p 21). Fiddes calls upon the Philippians quotation to describe *phusis* as a mindset of ethical wisdom arising from a way of perceiving learned (today) from phenomenological hermeneutics (Fiddes 2013 p 9). The feeling of identity with Christ is, according to Breton, the mark of Paul’s conversion and that of the Christian: the experience changes the self. Ricoeur would say as much about the encounter with poetic text, and Julian’s interactive porosity, and that of her reader, is resonant with this insight. The niche is intimate. The encounter is not, as Breton notes, bringing together ‘what is far apart’ (p 106), but already participative. Julian, like Paul, is in her writing bringing forth like childbirth the spontaneity of her experience, for her the direct experience of the dying Christ, for Paul a conversion in which his mind became that of Christ. Julian’s *phusis* gave birth to her writings which in turn draw her reader into participative encounter. Each of us must have a mind which is

Christ's; but that means our subjectivity has to be transformed, and for Julian in the eighth revelation, that means intense, porous, performative participation in the pains of Christ.

iv) Julian's own experience of the pains of Christ

The next development in the niche of the eighth revelation is Julian's own suffering. She had asked for three 'graces' (ST p 201.6) or 'giftes' (LT p 285.4) in her youth, that she should receive a sickness unto death, that she should experience the pain of the Passion, and that she should receive the 'wounds' of contrition, compassion and a longing for God. She said that the first two she forgot, and the third she remembered continually. The first, the illness that takes her so close to death that she will have the last rites administered to her 'that I might in that siknes haue vndertaken all my rightes of the holie church' (LT p 287.22f) is upon her (LT p 289.2ff), and now her mother thinks she has actually died, 'lokking' her eyes (ST p 234.30), a reference to which I will return below. The second 'gift', that she will have more knowledge of the bodily pains of Christ and the compassion of Mary his mother and those who loved him truly (LT p 286.12ff), is also now upon her: at this point in the narrative of the eighth revelation, both desires are fulfilled together in one niche. The porousness between Julian's and Christ's subjectivity is as participative as it can be. The pain she has felt at not wanting 'for her life' to have seen Christ's flesh fall, and the intensity of her witness, seamlessly transform into the direct experience of the pain of Christ, which becomes the transformational affordance (McGann 2015):

The shewyng of Cristes paynes fylled me fulle of peynes, for I wyste welle he suffryde but onys, but as he wolde shewe it me and fylle me with mynde, as I had before desyered. And in alle thys tyme of Cristes presens, I felte no peyne, but for Cristes paynes (LT p 364.50ff).

The authenticity of the experience is confirmed in the next passage, as Julian regrets her wish rather than revelling in it:

Than thought me I knew fulle lytylle what payne it was that I askyd, and as a wrech
I repentyd me, thyngkyng if I had wyste what it had be, loth me had been to haue
preyde it. For me thought my paynes passyd ony bodely deth (LT p 364.53ff).

The pain she feels, that 'passyd ony bodely deth' carries her through a barrier to a new perception. Now she is fully participating in the niche of the Passion, not just an onlooker, but, as Breton would recognise in his account of the Church's performative participation in Christ, *with* Christ, *in* pain passing death (Breton 2011 p 126). 'I knew fulle lytylle what payne it was that I askyd' is resonant with Matthew 20:22 and parallels, in which Christ asks the mother of James and John whether she knows what she is asking: 'Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?'. Julian's regret that she had ever asked to feel Christ's pains give a human fallibility and a touching veracity to her experience. It was worse than she could ever have imagined. The pain does not go away and she is indeed summoned to drink of the cup from which Christ drank.

The passage continues, now resonating with Lamentations 1:12:

I thought: Is ony payne in helle lyk thys? And I was answeyrd in my reson: Helle is
a nother peyne, for ther is dyspyer (LT pp 364.56ff).

Watson and Jenkins note that this question: was Christ's pain worse than hell? was a common one of the fourteenth century, for example Edmund of Abingdon asks it (Watson and Jenkins 2006 p 182), noted also by Windeatt (2016 p 212), but whereas Edmund accepts the question as rhetorical, Julian, with characteristic theological intelligence, stresses the difference between the two pains which she is shown: unlike the pain of the Passion, the (eternal) 'dyspyer' of hell has no hope.

The reflection thrusts the narrative forward into a time when the pain will cease, and Julian goes on immediately to understand the nature of her pain, which is itself now transforming. As it threatens to overcome Julian in a Levinasian displacement of self (Levinas 1984/1989), she sees, and understands what it means, that the pain she feels arises from her love for him. So 'pain' becomes 'love', and 'love' is now the energetic affordance that creates porosity of the subjects in

the niche. Love is transforming Julian's subjectivity, but it cannot be decoupled from pain: that is its cost, and Julian has felt it to her own dying core:

But of alle peyne that leed to saluacion, thys is the most, to se the loue to suffer.

How myght ony peyne be more then to see hym that is alle my lyfe, alle my blysse and alle my joy suffer? Here felt I stedfastly that I louyd Crist so much aboute my selfe that ther was no peyne that myght be sufferyd lyke to that sorow that I had to see hym in payne (LT p 365.58ff).

The pain is translated into love in the eighth revelation niche by Julian's steadfast, porous, performative interaction with Christ's Passion.

v) *Julian's mother, thinking Julian is dead, tries to close her eyes*

The act of the mother, recorded in ST but not in LT, adds to the components of the niche. As she moves, our attention as readers expands to encompass those who were with Julian in the room: I am aware again, for example, of the curate holding the crucifix before Julian's eyes.

My modere that stode emangys othere and behelde me lyftyd vppe hir hande before m(y) face to lokke mynn eyenn, for sche wenyd I had bene dede or els I hadde dyede; and this encresyd mekille my sorowe, for nought withstandynge alle my paynes, I wolde nought hafe beenn lettyd for loove that I hadde in hym (ST p 234.29ff).

The enactivist significance of this passage is its theme of light and seeing. We know that the light in the room is dim but the crucifix is self-effulgent (LT p 291.28ff). Julian had asked for more light but was told inwardly that if there was more to see, God would show it, emphasising that the seeing is not just bodily (LT p 291.325.11ff). This attempted action of closing Julian's eyes, ironically, will prevent Julian from continuing the one thing she longs still to do, that is, to see. But with the mother's action, the boundary between Christ and Julian is crossed, because it places Julian where Christ is: close to death. Her mother's action not only attests to the fact that Julian is (nearly) dead,

but the movement of the mother's arm 'into' the revelation means the niche being constructed now widens to include the mother and this material act. Julian's dying is so tied into the Passion narrative, though her distinction from Christ has been clear, the reader may find she sees Mary in Julian's mother and the other witnesses to the Crucifixion in the 'emangys othere' where her mother stood in the sickroom, thus identifying Julian directly with the dying Christ being so watched. This is the implication of the Philippians injunction, which for Julian is never going to be theoretical. As Badiou puts it, the 'truth is supported only by itself and relates to a new kind of subject, a new kind of 'me'. The production of equality is the material sign of the universal' (Badiou 2003 p 108).

The attempt to 'lokke' Julian's eyes is significant, since the revelations are to be seen, by their nature. Julian 'sees' more than she does anything else in her narrative. She mourns the action taken at this precise, climactic moment in the revelation, as Christ is dying and she is dying, for it separates her from the Christ whom she loves. The connecting porous energy is through the interior and exterior eyes, through Julian's seeing, of the Passion being enacted before her, and she cannot bear to be disconnected. Magill sees irony in her mother trying to 'lokke' her bodily eyes when it is through these that what he calls the 'integrated perceptual' vision takes place, and doubly so when we remember that Julian's looking and suffering places her directly within the tradition of Mary looking from the foot of the Cross on her son's suffering (as distinct from having her own 'Mary' to look at her). Magill suggests that the Passion is the means by which the lesson of divine love is taught: and Julian *sees* it (Magill 2006 p 80f).

vi) Julian's pains become Mary's pains

The passage about the lokking of the eyes by the mother is omitted from LT but motherhood itself is not. 'Here', says Julian, 'I saw in parte the compassion of our blessed lady saint Mary' (LT p 366.2). Julian's pain-that-is-love is precisely where she sees Mary's love. In the same place, the same niche, she finds the love that makes Mary's subjectivity porous with her son's. Just as Julian's love caused the greatest pain, to see her beloved in pain, so was Mary's love turned into pain: the

great pain that surpassed all other, as her love for her son surpassed all other. And Christ's pain is in turn increased to see her pain. This circle, or spiral, of love-pain is performative energetic niche creation, in which Julian's own experience of pain puts her in the same place as Mary. As Mary and her son are 'onyd in loue' (LT p 366.3), so is Julian, and so in turn is the reader. In making this connection, the participative energy always being love, all that has been said of Julian and of the reader can be said of Mary and, as the passage goes on to declare, of all Christ's lovers. The niche is constructed of love.

Here I saw in parte the compassion of our blessed lady saint Mary; for Crist and she was so onyd in loue that the grettnes of her loue was cause of the grettnes of her peyne. For in this I saw a substance of kynde loue contynued by grace that his creatures haue to hym, which kynde loue was most fulsomly shewde in his swete mother, and ovyrpassyng, for so much as she louyed hym more then alle other, her peyne passyd alle other (LT p 366.2ff).

The 'kinde love' that is the substance of their relationship, and then extended to Christ's 'creatures', is mother-close, as Julian writes as part of her long reflection on the fourteenth revelation (LT pp 594.1ff). A study within the enactivist movement, of a firewalking ritual, showed that the heartbeats of the families of the firewalkers increased at the same pace as the firewalkers' heartbeats as they watched the ritual, indicating a porous connection (Konvalinka et al. 2011). But Julian's later reflections on motherhood in the fourteenth revelation take the porous subjectivity of mother and son further, again removing boundaries, because she draws the conclusion that the nature of the love of motherhood is the nature of Christ's love: 'the motherhed of mercy and grace' (LT p 594.4) and 'the moderhed of kynd loue, whych kynde loue nevyr leevyth vs' (LT p 594.5f). This exquisite discourse on the motherhood of Christ thus concludes:

Thys feyer louely worde: Moder, it is so swete and so kynde in it selfe that it may not verely be seyde of none ne to none but of hym and to hym that is very mother of lyfe and of alle (LT p 598.45ff).

The niche is expanded by the size of the love of a mother, felt in all Christ's creatures, beginning with its being pierced by Julian's mother's own act of love, mistaken and ironic, and ending with a mother's love so great that it is appropriate to identify it as Christ's love.

vii) The pain spreads to the whole cosmos

The love of Mary sets the bar, as it were, for Christ's other lovers. The size of the love determines the size of the pain, and so all who loved Christ: the disciples and Julian herself, as she knew through her own experience, suffered pain.

For ever the hygher, the myghtyer, the swetter that the loue is, the more sorow it is to the lover to se that body in payne that he lovyd. And so alle hys dyscyples and alle his tru lovers sufferyd more payn than ther awne bodely dyeng, for I am suer by my awne felyng that the lest of them lovyd hym so farre abovyn them selfe that it passyth alle that I can sey (LT pp 366.8ff).

The niche expands to include those selves whose love makes them porous and whose subjectivity is changed through the pain they suffer because of their love. But the expansion of the niche does not stop at those who loved Christ. Julian understands from her first revelation that Mary, 'a symple creature of [God's] making' (LT p 298.34), is the highest thing in creation:

In this syght I did vnderstand verily that she is more then all that god made beneth her in wordines and in fullhead, for aboue her is nothing that is made but the blessed manhood of Christ, as to my sight (LT pp 298.34ff).

Mary is a creature, and as a creature suffers pain as the manhood of Christ does. In the eighth revelation Julian saw that at the Passion all creatures that could suffer pain did so, and in this is their 'onyng' with Christ. Thus the niche expands again, not through love-pain any more but just pain:

Here saw I a grett onyng betwene Crist and vs, to my vnderstandyng; for when he was in payne we ware in payne, and alle creatures that myght suffer payne sufferyd with hym (LT p 367.14ff).

Because all creatures are of the same 'kynd' or nature as Christ in his manhood, they experienced through sorrow the same failing that Christ suffered in the Passion. This is a strong assertion of creation theology in which Christ is identified in his humanity with the whole cosmos, 'the fyrmamente and erth' (LT p 367.17). Christ's subjectivity as mortal is in deep performative interaction with all creatures, because in him 'alle ther vertuse stondyth' (LT p 367.19f). The failing of the cosmos at the Passion was not through knowledge of Christ but through shared nature, or 'kynd'.

The creatures that 'knew hym nott sufferde all maner comfort saue the myghty pryve kepyng of god' (LT p 367.23f). This seeing of Julian resonates with her 'little thing, the quantitie of an haselnott' (LT p 299.9f) which 'lasteth and ever shall, for god loueth it; and so hath all thing being by the loue of god' (LT p 300.15f). Thus the 'kynd' of the cosmos, the 'little thing', as well as being porous with Christ's humanity, is also in porous interaction with his divinity, because without his divine nature creation would fail altogether. God's 'pryve kepyng' is formed of love, and this is why God will never be wrathful at our sins, because if God were wrathful, his love would fail, and creation would fail. God would not be wrathful against himself:

our lorde god as aneynst hym self may not forgeue, for he may not be wroth. It were vnpossible. For this was shewed, that oure lyfe is alle grounded and rotyd in loue, and without loue we may not lyve (LT p 505.3ff).

The porosity of subjectivity between creation and God is made plain. For Julian, creation is continually sustained by God's love. The porous interaction of creatures at the Passion in the eighth revelation can be seen to arise from Julian's theology of creation, their very being granted by love (LT p 300.12ff) and made for integration (LT p 304.2ff), articulated by John Webster in his account of the meaning of *creatio ex nihilo* (Webster 2013 pp 160ff). The participative relation of creatures made out of nothing by God 'constitutes' creatures. 'Existing belongs to God by his essence, and [...] to other things by participation' (p 164). Furthermore, God's act of creation is one of 'purposive' love: 'Love *gives* life, and love gives *life*' (p 168, author's italics). The integrity of

creatures comes from the ‘benevolent love’ which ‘establishes and safeguards’ that which it creates’ (p 168). Such created integrity means that the actions of creatures are themselves directed towards completion. In our post-Ricoeurian terms, and in Julian’s understanding of ‘beseeching and beseking’ (LT pp 460.3ff), the asymmetry of creatureliness provokes a performative and porous response to God.

The niche of all creation is energised and the porous interactions take place through God’s love, even when there is no knowledge of each other. The pain is still love, even though creation does not know it. Julian calls upon witnesses, ‘Pylate’ and ‘seynt Dyonisi of France’ (LT p 368.27), to the ‘onyng’ of creatures with the manhood of Christ even when they do not know him. Dyonisi is Julian’s explicit witness: he was a ‘paynym’ (LT p 368.28) and had no basis of love of Christ to see that the disturbance of the whole cosmos, the planets and the elements were caused by the Passion; and yet that is what he saw. Thus is the cosmos drawn into the niche. For as Julian quotes Dyonisi: ‘Eyther the worlde is now at an ende, or elles he that is maker of kyndes sufferyth’ (LT p 368.29ff). Pilate and Dyonisi are powerful witnesses precisely because they were not believers (Windeatt 2016 p 213). Julian concludes her argument: ‘Wher for it was that they that knew hym nott were in sorow that tyme’ (LT p 369.34f). The lens of the revelation has widened to include the whole cosmos and so Christ is now identified with the whole cosmos. The niche is cosmic. Humanity’s home is Christ, and the creation of that niche is won through pain, pain caused by the cosmos knows not what, as Julian herself knew not what caused her alternation some twenty times between the light and darkness of her soul in the seventh revelation. Julian’s creation theology has not just herself, not just herself plus all ‘evyn cristen’, but all of these *and* the whole cosmos as summoned selves to the Cross, participating in the niche that has been constructed of the Passion that she has been shown.

The niche Julian’s eighth revelation has constructed includes all creation, whose elements porously interact through love which is fundamentally an expression of God’s love, binding all

creation in what Joseph Murray has described as a ‘cosmic covenant’ (Murray 1992).⁷⁶ Hence the Passion of Christ, whose intense pain was experienced by his lovers because of their love for him, was also experienced by all of creation because creation is the same in kind as Christ’s manhood, and all creatureliness is absolutely dependent upon the same God’s love.

viii) Julian does not look away from the Cross

The breadth of Julian’s vision of God’s love universally encompassing creation makes the next stage in her revelation all the more powerful, for immediately following her seeing all creation ‘onyd’ (LT p 367.1) with Christ, the revelation moves back to the tiny, microcosmic place of the crucifix in front of her. As all creation is ‘onyd’ with Christ, so it is ‘onyd’ with his Passion: Christ is all creation; creation is sustained and made of God’s love; love is the Cross. The Cross thus becomes a distillation of creation. As Julian’s vision swiftly refocuses on the singularity and narrow clarity of the crucifix held before her eyes, she understands that all that she needs, all that is, is *here*, not away in some other, seemingly larger, space. Julian’s niche is essential: the distilled, intense and undiluted heart of suffering, the greatest suffering that could ever have been or ever will be experienced.

Julian writes:

In this tyme I wolde haue lokyde fro the crosse, and I durst nott, for I wyste wele
whyle that I behelde the crosse I was suer and safe. Ther fore I wolde nott assent to
put my soule in perelle, for besyde the crosse was no surenesse fro drede of fendes
(LT p 370.1f).

All the commentaries attest to the medieval belief that the Cross was surrounded by fiends. In the text Julian has indicated already her fear of them. When the curate has set the crucifix before her eyes and she has assented to rest them on it, and her sight begins to fail and there is darkness all

⁷⁶ An account of Old Testament theology that highlights those passages which speak of the interdependent relationship between all created things and the God who made them and eternally keeps them, eg Psalms 89 and 104.

about except in the image of the crucifix, Julian adds: 'All that was beseid the crosse was oglye and ferfull to me as it had ben much occupied with fiendes' (LT p 291.30ff). In her final vision, which happens in her sleep following the much-regretted denial ('I had ravyd to day' (LT p 633.17)) of all the previous revelations, a clearly seen fiend actually attacks her, perhaps because she *had* 'looked away':

Ande in my slepe at the begynnyng me thought the fende sett hym in my throte,
puttyng forth a vysage fulle nere my face lyke a yonge man, and it was longe and
wonder leen (LT p 635.2ff).

In this eighth revelation, Julian is encouraged to look away from the Cross and straight up into heaven, a posture she had assumed before the curate placed the crucifix before her eyes (LT p 291.21ff). She refuses, thus refocusing her readers onto the concentrated place of the Cross itself, now known to be one with the whole universe, and at the same time exonerating her own regret for having sought Christ's pain. Julian's choice not to look away from the Cross is tested by a friendly voice:

Than had I a profyr in my reason, as it had ben frendely seyde to to me: Loke uppe
to hevyn to hys father (LT p 370.6f).

But she understands that her niche of love and pain is right here in the dying Christ himself, and there was no space between the Cross and heaven for fiends to interpose and hurt her:

And than sawe I wele with the feyth that I felt that ther was nothyng betwene the
crosse and hevyn that myght haue dyssesyd me (LT p 370.7ff).

She understands she has to make an explicit decision:

Here me behovyd to loke vppe or elles to answe. I answeyd inwardly with alle
the myght of my soule, and sayd: Nay, I may nott, for thou art my hevyn (LT pp
370.9ff).

She unequivocally affirms that her place is in the pain of Christ, not elsewhere:

Thys I seyde for I wolde nott; for I had levyr a bene in that payne tylle domys day
than haue come to hevyn other wyse than by hym. For I wyst wele that he that
bounde me so sore, he shuld vnbynd me whan he wolde (LT p 371.11ff).

Julian is in enactive encounter with Christ, who has ‘bounde’ her sore. In medieval iconography this image has erotic overtones.⁷⁷ Margery Kempe declares that ‘al hir lofe & al hir affeccyon was set in the manhode of Crist’ (Meech and Allen 1940 p 86.21f). But whereas Kempe is ‘sor aferd of the Godhede’ and distinguishes it from the manhood (p 86.20ff) Julian resists the suggestion from the ‘profyr in her reason’ (LT p 370.6) that in order to see ‘hys father’ she needs to look away from the Son. Julian’s Trinity is integrated, as Nicholas Watson emphasises (1992), and she knows this, I suggest, because of her performative participation: her ‘onyng’ with Christ teaches her that all the Trinity is present here on the bloody Cross.

At the beginning of her revelations, in an act that initiates them, Julian had made a practical decision to lower her eyes, which had been fixed uncomfortably upwards towards heaven, and rest them on the crucifix her curate held before her because she could manage that for longer (LT p 291.22ff). Now this practical decision becomes a theological and cosmological one; the act is performative and it becomes porous, with profound consequences. Like the witnessing relatives in the Konvalinka fire walking ritual (2011) Julian experiences directly the pain of the Passion. Like the students in the Koubova experiment (Koubova 2015), despite the pain, she nevertheless remains, not going away, attending on the other. Julian’s participative encounters that create this niche happen because she *does not look away*. Seeing that Christ in the midst of his Passion is her ‘hevyn’, a Passion whose pain she now knows only too well, she will not look away from the Cross. That the crucifix is lit by its own luminescence: ‘he shal be thy light; thou nedyth none but him’ (LT p 325.13f) emphasises the niche’s concentrated self-sufficiency that is all-encompassing.

Paradoxically, as it focusses in this tiny material space, Julian’s niche is growing: it now includes

⁷⁷ Watson and Jenkins (2006) compare the reference to Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde* 3.1358: ‘How koude ye withouten bond me binde’, and the *Ancrene Wisse* in Part 7 makes it clear that Christ is bound to humanity as humanity is to him: ‘love binds our Lord, so that he cannot do anything except with love’s leave’ (Watson and Jenkins 2006 p 186).

not only all creation but ‘hevyn’ too, distilled in the drying, dying Christ whose manhood is also an expression of the Godhead, and whose pain, Julian has declared, is her heaven. Windeatt observes Julian’s ‘pervasive spatial discourse of enclosing and of a mutual indwelling — simultaneously enfolding and being enfolded — that explodes the limits of material spatiality’ (2016 p xxvii). The niche is cosmic but it is also minutely focused: there is nothing between the Cross and heaven that would ‘dysses’ Julian: there is no room for the fiends between the two because they are in one niche. The Cross and heaven are affordances in the porous interaction between Julian and Christ; the Cross is heaven too. The niche is truly universal, itself and all it contains in porous intermingled interaction. Julian’s creation theology, in which all things are ‘onyd’ in Christ, extends now, I propose, *contra* Windeatt,⁷⁸ and stretching even my own observations on ‘evyn cristen’ in Chapter Four, to her salvation theology. All things, including material ones, will be ‘onyd in blysse’. The niche is universal, the encounter transformative, Julian is everyman and her flesh, through her porous interaction with Christ, all creation.

The encounter is energised by paradox: regret at experiencing the pain of Christ she had so earnestly sought; choosing wilfully Christ on the Cross as her heaven; pain and love. The paradoxes are energetic and the dynamic movement between them creates the niche. Julian declares herself much relieved that she learned to choose Jesus for her heaven, even though all she saw was his pain. This was the pain she had regretted asking to feel; now her regret is exonerated as she deliberately remains in it, feeling it, looking at it: porously and performatively interacting with it.

Through this seeing, pain and heaven are conflated. This is profoundly contradictory, but Julian has been prepared for it by her previous, seventh, revelation of the undeserved alternating weal and woe. Julian makes the encounter of pain and heaven pedagogic as she characteristically learns and thereby teaches that it is a constant and ongoing choice:

⁷⁸ who, as we saw, writes that Julian ‘never declares’ universal salvation’ (Windeatt 2016 p xxxvi).

Thus was I lernyd to chese Jhesu for my hevyn, whom I saw only in payne at that tyme. Me lykyd no nother hevyn than Jhesu, whych shalle be my blysse when I come ther. And this hath evyr be a comfort to me, that I chose Jhesu to be my hevyn by his grace in alle this tyme of passion and sorow. And that hath ben a lernyng to me, that I shulde evyr more do so, to chese Jhesu only to my hevyn in wele and in woe (LT p 371.15ff).

The wilful choice of Jesus in ‘wele and in woe’ fold these cosmic insights back into the causeless ‘wele and woe’ of the seventh revelation. Julian has seen that weal and woe visit her regardless of her own sin; now she knows for certain that Christ is in the woe as much as the weal, and her choice can and will remain steadfast whichever she is experiencing. The Cross asserts the nature of the niche: it is the vulnerable, summoned self of Christ, who is himself done unto. *This* is heaven, not some other place.

The choice she made stands in contrast to her regret and repentance for having asked to experience Christ’s pains (LT p 364.53ff), and she reflects on how the choices were made. It was her body that regretted the experience of pain, and God does not blame the body:

And though I as a wrech hath repentyd me, as I seyde before, yff I had wyst what payne it had be, I had be loth to haue prayde it, heer I saw werely that it was grugyng and dawnger frealte of the flessch without assent of the soule, in whych god assignyth no blame (LT pp 371.21ff).

Wilful choice, the choice she made not to look away from the suffering, was inward: her internal niche. The pain of the flesh and its desire not to experience the pain (‘repenting’ of the experience as Julian had) is outward, and to be understood as without blame. Inwardly right choices can be made:

Repentyng and wylfulle choyse be two contrarytes, whych I felt both at that tyme; and tho be two partes, that oon outward, that other inwarde. The outwarde party is our dedely flessch, whych is now in payne and now in woo, and shalle be in this

lyfe, where of I felte moch in thys tyme; and that party was that I repentyd. The inward party is a hygh and a blessydfulle lyfe, whych is alle in peece and in loue, and this is more pryvely felte; and this party is in whych myghtly, wysely and wylfully, I chose Jhesu to my hevyn (LT p 372.24ff).

Julian's reflection on what this might mean for freewill and salvation follows, a typical 'musing' (Magill 2006) on the theological implications of what she has seen and experienced, including what she has not seen:

And in this I saw truly that the inward party is master and souereyne to the outward, nought charging nor takyng hede of the wylles of that, but alle the intent and the wylle is sett endlesly to be onyd to our lorde Jhesu. That the outward party sholde drawe the inward to assent was not shewde to me; but that the inwarde party drawyth the outward party by grace, and both shalle be onyd in blysse without ende by the vertu of Christ, this was shewde (LT pp 372.33ff).

The inner and the outer are porous to each other. That Julian was shown that the inner leads the outer exonerates her from her repenting of her wish to suffer Christ's pains, which she bitterly regretted. She sees how God sees us in our sin. For there is no condemnation of the inner (substance), and the outer (sensory being) has no will, so there is no condemnation, a Ricoeurian 'explosive' realisation to which her subjectivity has been made porous by the seventh, weal and woe, revelation. Barry Winderatt notes (2015 p xlvii) that in showing that the outward 'sensory being' does not harm the inward but both shall be united in Christ, the passage dignifies sensory being and gives it worth (Winderatt 2015 p xxviiff), because it, as well as the 'higher being' of substance, are both in Christ. Julian declares, in a comment on her eighth revelation later in the text: 'theyse two pertyes were in Crist, the heyer and the lower, whych is but one soule... and theyse two pertyes were seene and felte in the viij shewyng, in whych my body was fulfyllyd of felyng and mynd of Cristes Passion and hys dyeng' (LT p 569.49ff).

But there is more to the passage than a recognition that the inner substance leads the outer sensory being, that the two are united in Christ, and that the sensory being is dignified by the unity. Julian *chose* the sensory being of Christ, the ‘vernicle’-ugly (LT p 331.65),⁷⁹ scarred and disfigured, despised and buffeted Christ, and found heaven there. By not looking away from the sensory being of Christ, the subjectivity both of her own sensory being and that of Christ became porous to each other without disappearing into each other. Then through the sensory being, not away from it, not by dismissing it or rejecting it or transcending it, but porously through it, divinity is seen. In her later comment on the revelation, Julian writes that she had:

a suddell felyng and a prevy inwarde syghte of the hye partys, wher I myghte nott
for the mene profer loke vp in to hevyn. And that was for that ech myghty
beholdyng of the inwarde lyfe, whych inward lyfe is that hye substannce, that
precious soule whych is endlessly enjoyeng in the godhede (LT p 569.54ff).

Julian learns to look at, not away, and keep steadfastly looking at the outer sensory being, and in this way penetrate through to the ‘precious soule’ which is endlessly with and in God. Julian and her attentive reader are in profound porous and performative interaction as what is seen and felt in all its intensity becomes a doorway into divinity.

ix) Christ’s final, terrible suffering

The final death pains of Christ follow, suffered all the more greatly and extensively through time because of the strength his divinity gave him to endure. His high sovereignty means he can suffer longer, but Julian focusses on the joining of high sovereignty with pain. This clear seeing in a niche where the pain and the divinity become one is the ‘hyest poynt’, the most important seeing, not the suffering per se, nor those for whom he suffered:

⁷⁹ Julian likens the appearance of Christ in the eighth revelation to the vernicle in Rome (LT p 331.64), a relic which was believed to be the handkerchief with which Veronica wiped the face of Christ as he struggled with his cross on the road to Calvary, and which bears the imprint of his suffering face (if we accept Colledge and Walsh’s emendation of ‘seconnde’ to ‘vijj’ [revelation] to match the chapter, xvj, which Julian refers to, which is of the eighth not the second revelation (Colledge and Walsh 1978 p 331.64 fn)).

And thus saw I oure lorde Jhesu languryng long tyme, for the vnyng of the godhead gaue strength to the manhed for loue to suffer more than alle man myght. I meene not oonly more payne than alle man myght suffer, but also that he sufferd more payne than all man of saluacion that evyr was from the furst begynnyng in to the last day myght telle or fully thynke, havyng regard to the worthynes of the hyghest worshypful kyng and the shamfulle and dyspyteous peynfull deth. For he that is hyghest and worthyest was foulest co(n)dempnyd and vtterly dyspysed; for the hyest poynt that may be seen in his passion is to thynke and to know that he is god that sufferyd, seeyng after these other two poyntes whych be lower. That one is what he sufferyd; and that other for whom that he sufferyd (LT pp 374.1ff).

Christ is able to suffer for much longer because of the divinity in his flesh, and the reader is reminded of the earlier passage in the same revelation where the spirits of Christ's flesh are put out one by agonising one (LT p 358.20f). Julian uses the language of contemplation and her words might be read as stages of contemplation: to see, to think, to know. The highest point of contemplation is that it is God that suffers, and two other points which are lower are what he suffered and for whom he suffered. Colledge and Walsh argue that 'see' is 'apprehend' rather than 'contemplate' here, since contemplation 'feels', citing as their authority Guigo II: 'Lesson sekyth, meditacion fyndith, orison askith, contemplacion felith' (Colledge and Walsh 1978 p 375.10 fn). But the niche of this revelation is steeped in feeling, and the reader is brought to that sharp feeling by his contemplation of the text that explodes his world as he sees the Godhead *itself* in spiteful pain. God and pain now perform interactively and porously in the niche of the Passion, and Julian and her reader can feel what that means, not from a distance, but as beings embedded and embodied within the niche.

The paradoxical porosity of sovereignty's subjectivity including 'lothfullnesse' is emphasised as the theme recurs in Julian's seeing of Godhead 'onyd' with manhood and of divinity 'onyd' with pain. The dimensions of the niche are made vast by the inclusion of these

asymmetric extremes, and its detailed particularity is made evident in the inclusion of ‘every mannys synne [...] and sorow’:

And in thys he brought to mynd in parte the hygh(t) and the nobylte of the glorious godhede, and ther with the precioushede and the tendyrnesse of the blessydfulle body whych be to gether onyd, and also the lothfullnesse that in our kynde is to suffer peyne. For as moch as he was most tendyr and clene, ryght so he was most strong and myghty to suffer. And for every mannys synne that shal be savyd he sufferyd; and every mannes sorow, desolacion and angwysshe he sawe and sorowd, for kyndnes and loue (LT pp 375.14ff).

The ‘suffering for sorrow’ is made particular and real by reference to Mary: ‘For in as mech as our lady sorowde for his paynes, as mech sufferde he sorow for her sorowse’ (LT p 375.22f). The mother and son are caught in a dynamic interaction of sorrow for sorrow, an endless dance of porous subjectivity. Julian sees that the suffering continues after the passing of Christ’s body in the Passion: his suffering is his subjectivity and it does not come to an end: ‘for as long as he was passyble he sufferde for vs and sorowde for vs. And now he is vppe resyn and no more passibylle; yett he sufferyth with vs as I shalle sey after’ (LT pp 376.24ff). Colledge and Walsh note the earliest example of ‘passibylle’ is in Richard Rohr where it carries the meaning of ‘capable of suffering’. If Julian understood the word in this way, she is foregrounding a great paradox: Christ is no longer capable of suffering after he is ‘vppe resyn’ and yet he continues to, ‘myldely... with grett joy’ and wilfully (LT p 377.27f). The power of the porous interaction of Christ’s suffering for each soul is love: ‘and I beholdyng alle this by hys grace saw that the loue in hym was so strong whych he hath to oure soule’ and the soul that, with Julian, sees this, also sees that the subjectivity of pain becomes joy:

for the soule that beholdyth thus whan it is touchyd by grace, he shalle verely see that tho paynes of Cristes passion passe all paynes; that is to sey, whych paynes shal be turned in to everlastyng joy by the vertu of Cristes passion (LT p 377.28ff).

In a sentence which might be a summing up of the whole revelation of Christ's Passion, Julian writes:

It is gods wyllle, as to my vnderstandyng, that we haue iij maner of beholdyng of his blessyd passion. The furst is the harde payne that he sufferyd with a contriccion and compassion; and that shewde oure lorde in this tyme, and gaue me myght and grace to see it (LT pp 377.33ff).⁸⁰

Of the three 'maner of beholdyng', the first is the 'harde payne that he sufferyd' and the second and third, according to Colledge and Walsh, are the contrition and compassion to which Julian refers in this sentence. It is not at all clear from the syntax that 'contriccion' and 'compassion' are the two other 'maner of beholdyng', despite the fact that Julian does not, at that point, go on to say what the other 'maner' are, but hastens into her description of Christ's transition from death to resurrected life. Since Julian uses numbered lists all the time and she almost never fails to deliver the full list,⁸¹ it seemed highly unlikely that she would fail on this score. Windeatt notices (2016 p 218), but neither Colledge and Walsh nor Watson and Jenkins do, that Julian does indeed deliver her promised list later in the text, and these 'beholdings' fill out her understanding of the eighth revelation. At LT p 386, in the ninth revelation, Julian hears Christ ask her if she is 'well apayd'.

⁸⁰ Colledge and Walsh end the eighth revelation here, placing the Resurrection in the ninth revelation. Their arguments are first, that this is a summary sentence, as discussed below, and second that there is internal confusion in the Paris MS, since the ninth revelation is begun twice, the second time in agreement with Sloane (Colledge and Walsh 1978 p 360.1 fn; p 382.1 fn). However I saw for myself when I read Paris that the first 'ninth reuelation' of the rubrics (at LT p 360.1 in the Colledge and Walsh edition) is clearly scored through in the same red ink in which it and all the rubrics are written, and the MS continues with 'eighth revelation' headings, indicating that it was a mistake and the (same) scribe knew it as such. Because of this and what I believe is a misreading by Colledge and Walsh of this summary sentence, I do not accept their edit, and with Sloane and (my reading of) Paris take the passages that follow (beginning at LT 379.1 in the Colledge and Walsh edition) to belong within the eighth revelation.

⁸¹ From the LT see pp 281.3; 285.4; 288.41; 300.17; 317.4; 323.29; 334.83; 334.87; 352.13; 357.8 (here Julian refers to iij colours and one has to work quite hard to find them, but they are there: 'rody', 'blew', 'browne' and 'blacke'); 358.19; 360.3; 363.38; 368.26; 372.25; 375.11; 383.9 (the list is of three heavens; Julian only tells us of one of them, but her point is that all three are of the manhood of Christ); 389.2; 389.3; 401.38; 410.24; 414.2; 423.20 (the v words Julian refers to are actually vi: 'I may make alle thing welle'); 430.2; 440.54f; 452.27; 460.4; 461.15, 17 (Paris MS says vj, corrected by Colledge and Walsh to ii to make sense; a fair editorial decision since it is so rare for Julian not to give a full list); 468.3; 483.8f; 487.11; 491.16; 495.2; 497.26; 512.29; 514.4; 515.22; 519.70; 527.164; 552.72; 553.83; 569.49; 574.44f; 575.55; 583.20; 585.30; 593.43 (the list promises three; Julian adds a fourth, however the poetry of the context allows it); 631.35; 654.2 (the vj words promised can be surmised to be: take, believe, keep, comfort, trust, [thou shalt not be] overcome); 656.25; 659.4; 665.54; 666.2f; 666.9; 671.2; 678.2; 679.9; 687.23; 696.6; 707.2; 722.2; 727.10.

Christ's meaning is, she says, that because of his love he would 'dye so oftyn, havynge no regard to [his] hard paynes'. She immediately follows this by noticing:

And heer saw I for the *seconde beholding* in his blessyde passion. The loue that made hym to suffer it passith as far alle his paynes as hevyn is aboue erth; for the payne was a noble precious and wurschypfulle dede done in a tyme by the workyng of loue. And loue was without begynnyng, is and shall be without ende' (LT pp 386.45ff, my italics).

This second beholding re-emphasises the character of the niche created by the Passion revelation. The pain is born of love and its performance emerges from its porous subjectivity with love. In the analogy of love with heaven and pain with Earth, the reader understands that pain will ultimately pass while love never will, but because of the porosity of pain and love, wherever the pain in the Earth is, there is love also, and the love is without end.

The third beholding is found at the beginning of Chapter 23:

And heer saw I for the *thyrde beholding* in hys blessydfulle Passion, that is to sey the joy and the blysse that makyth hym to lyke it' (LT p 389.6ff, my italics).

By this third beholding the joy that Julian had seen in Christ's wilful choosing of suffering for each sin and each sorrow is brought to the fore, given its place in the niche, performatively interacting with pain and love. In the great performance of the Passion, pain, love and joy are themselves in porous interaction, as are those performers (God, Christ, Julian, the reader) who experience them.

Looking back at the first beholding with the second and third beholdings in mind, we hear again Julian's articulation that Christ suffered the 'harde payne [...] with a contriccion and compassion' (LT p 378.34f). Julian's own wounds, sought from her early life, are now found here in Christ, suffused with love and joy. Christ's subjectivity and her own become porous to each other as she is given 'myght and grace to see' (LT p 378.36).

x) *The transition from death into life on the Cross*

Finally, I include the transformation from death into life which takes place in such a way that Julian does not see Christ dead. The not seeing of death in this finale (*contra* the Colledge and Walsh edit) to the eighth revelation falls into the category of things Julian does not see because they are not there, like God's wrath (LT p 506.13ff). Not-seeing is as important as seeing for Julian, as Nicholas Watson observes: 'Julian finds revelatory material in what she *does not see*' (Watson 1992 p 90, author's italics). Not-seeing itself gives insights. Julian's not-seeing of Christ's death is not simply a detail to emphasise the swiftness of the change. Time is not linear in this niche. All creation and all time is *here*, concentrated on this figure on the Cross, *now* horribly suffering, drying and dying, *now* transformed into blissful cheer. The suffering of Christ for humanity is a form of continuity; his physical suffering ends but his suffering for us remains, for the time being, 'mornyng and mornyng tylle whan we come' (LT p 706.37). Love, which cannot be divided from suffering, remains constant.

And I lokyd after the departyng with alle my myghtes, and wende to haue seen the
body alle deed; but I saw him nott so. And right in the same tyme that me thought
by semyng that the lyfe myght no lenger last, and the shewyng of the ende behovynd
nydes to be nye, sodenly I beholdyng in the same crosse he channgyd in
blessydfulle chere (LT p 379.1ff).

Just as Julian's heaven had turned out to be not other than or away from the bloody Christ on the Cross, so Christ's Resurrection is not other than his bloody self on the Cross. The resurrected Christ remains wounded, as Sheldrake observes (Sheldrake 2016 p 112). In Alain Badiou's account of the Resurrection, for Paul there is an absolute disjunction between death and Resurrection. Resurrection 'is neither a sublation, nor an overcoming of death. They are two distinct functions' (Badiou 2003 p 71). The sudden and unnecessary emergence of the event of the Resurrection remains of the order of grace. The crucifix does not cease to be an affordance in the

niche, but the transformation of Christ's subjectivity transforms what is in the niche, beginning with Julian herself:

The channgyng of hys blessyd chere changyd myne, and I was as glad and mery as it was possible. Then brought oure lorde meryly to my mynd: Wher is now any poynt of thy payne or of thy anguysses? And I was fulle mery (LT p 379.1ff).

The Passion itself is revealed as an 'act of joy' (Watson and Jenkins 2006 p 192), confirmed in Julian's third beholding (LT p 389.6ff), cited above. The subjectivity of Julian has been transformed by the transformation of Christ, and because Julian is everyman, so is our subjectivity:

I vnderstode that we be now in our lordes menyng in his crosse with hym in our paynes and in our passion dyeng, and we wilfully abydyng in the same crosse with his helpe and his grace in to the last poynt (LT pp 379.11ff).

The inclusion of heaven in the niche of Christ's bloody Passion, in which we are all porously interacting, is affirmed:

Sodeynly he shalle channgge hys chere to vs, and we shal be with hym in hevyn (LT p 380.14f).

That there is no linear time between the pain and the joy is affirmed:

Betwene that one and that other shalle alle be one tyme; and than shall alle be brought in to joy (LT p 380.15).

The performative and porous interaction of all in the Passion is confirmed as the 'blyssedfulle chere' of Christ. Christ's cheer has transformed the niche but denied none of the pain that is in it, and his 'chere of passion' porously transforms all our pain. Our porosity to him means that the pain that goes with our creatureliness, 'as our kynd askyth', is his pain, and so our pain is 'chere' of passion' too:

And so ment he in thys shewyng: Wher is now any poynt of thy payne or of thy agreffe? And we shalle be fulle of blysse. And here saw I verely that if he shewde now to vs his blyssedfulle chere, there is no payne in erth ne in no nother place that

shuld trobylle vs, but alle thyng shulde be to vs joy and blysse. But for he shewyth vs chere of passion as he bare in this lyfe hys crosse, therefore we be in dysees and traveyle with hym as our kynd askyth (LT pp 380.16ff).

The ground of the 'chere of passion' is 'pooled' and it is a 'joint project' (Raczaszek-Leonardi, Debska, and Sochanowicz 2015) between the porous subjectivity of Christ and the porous subjectivity of the reader, who is now an heir:

And the cause why that he sufferyth is for he wylle of hys goodnes make vs the eyers with hym in hys blysse. And for this lytylle payne that we suffer heer we shalle haue an hygh endlesse knowyng in god, which we myght nevyr haue without that. And the harder oure paynes haue ben with hym in hys crosse, the more shalle our worschyppe be with hym in his kyngdom (LT pp 381.23ff).

The seventh revelation, in which Julian learns that pain is passing, even though it will happen, is recalled as Julian concludes:

For it is goddes wylle that we holde vs in comfort with alle oure myght; for blysse is lastyng without end, and payne is passyng, and shall be brought to nowght to them that shall be savyd. Therefore it is not goddes wylle that we folow the felyng of paynes in sorow and mowrnyng for them, but sodaynly passe ovyr and holde vs in the endlesse lykyng that is god (LT p 356.29ff).

But Julian did hold fast to the sorrow while she was identifying with Christ's sorrow, and only passed over when Christ himself did. Christ in ugly pain is heaven. Christ, disfigured like the 'vernacle of Rome' (LT p 331.65) and humiliated, that *same* Christ is 'blessydfulle chere'. And his changing, which was as swift as Julian's shifting moods in the seventh revelation, changed Julian: 'and I was as glad and mery as it was possible' (LT p 379.8f). The change is not linear: 'betwene that one and that other shalle alle be one tyme' (LT p 380.15). In an instant the cosmos is also the transformed, resurrected Christ, still on the Cross, still, one imagines, bloody, transformed nevertheless into the highest heaven, and drawing all with him.

Concluding summary

The eighth revelation is the culmination of Julian's wish in her early life to suffer Christ's Passion 'nere his dyeng'. The text offers its reader a clear picture of the scene of the revelation, in which Julian lies close to her own death, in a room in which, among others, her mother is attending her, and her curate has placed the crucifix under her eyes. In McGann's terms (2015), Julian is 'achieving' an encounter as she engages with her surroundings. For Julian, the crucifix is an affordance, which is to say it is a part of her niche whose meaning and even name is conferred by her interaction with it. The crucifix would not be an affordance for another who had not so earnestly sought the experience Julian was about to undergo, because it would not hold the same meaning for that other: he or she would not see in it what Julian saw, her seeing influenced by pictures (ST p 202.16) and, we infer from the text, homilies, possibly books that she had read, adding to the dramatic meaning of the crucifix being held under her downcast eyes as she lay propped up in bed. Her crucifix is an affordance because it is not, in this precise circumstance, merely an aspect or property of the environment, but a relation that holds between Julian and her environment (McGann 2015 p 23); it has come to life, as it were, under her imploring gaze. Julian 'makes sense' of her crucifix through participation in it. Importantly, as McGann notes, this participative sense-making needs no mediation or creation of a perceptual image. Julian has a hinterland of meanings which forms her niche, arising above all from her readiness not only to experience the pain of the Passion but also herself to nearly die. When that near-death experience comes about, she is able to make sense using what was in her niche as affordances. But it is the crucifix itself, and not some imagined symbol or image, that is the ground of her revelation. Thus for Julian I can propose that the crucifix itself moved and spoke. Nothing else is happening for Julian at this moment. Externalities impinge later (her mother attempting to 'lokke' her eyes because she thought she was dead) which only serve to emphasise the potent focus of the niche of the revelation itself. The reality of the dying body of Christ was revealed to Julian in such a way

that she experienced it as closely as if it were happening to her, while retaining a sense of herself as a lover of Christ, who suffered because of the love, not because she became Christ. The two are deeply and porously engaged in a performative encounter, made possible by the affordance that the crucifix becomes under Julian's very particular eye.

The encounter of the two students occupying the stage in the fourth part of the Koubova experiment (Koubova 2015) provides insight into the niche that has been created. Julian is prepared in her life-long wish to nearly die, to experience Christ's Passion, and to be wounded, as perhaps the students were prepared in their courageous and patient attention to being alone on stage, in their discerning of a hidden, powerful self that can be born and take its part as a potent contributor to meaning and engagement. Thus prepared, Julian and the student can encounter the other — Christ or another student — in steady receptive acceptance, in allowing of the other, waiting for the other, being endlessly curious about the other, and being able to respond with great subtlety and attentiveness to the slightest move of the other (Koubova 2015 p 69).

The eighth revelation brings to Julian's subjectivity the porosity of an understanding of Christ identified with the whole cosmos, that identity being graphically felt by her through the prism first of her own identification with his suffering, then Mary's, then all his lovers, and then all that did not know him, including all creatures and elements. The identification is intensely felt because of the pain that Julian experienced, and it is precisely this Christ, the one who is so slowly and painfully drying and dying, in time stretched out, that is identified with the cosmos. Julian does not look up to heaven, away from the Christ on the Cross. She declares that Christ is her heaven. And it is that same Christ, the one she is looking at, that changes into 'joy and blysse' under her very eyes, with no moment of dying that she can detect. Thus the niche being created has a body in heaven. Davies observes that this representation of such 'heavenly dimensions' supports a 'cosmic level of human niche construction': our niche is the Creator's niche (Davies 2016 pp 106f).

Julian brings her already-porous subjectivity to the revelation in her lifelong wounds of contrition, compassion and longing to God, and in her readiness to experience the Passion. Through

the long, painful, Ricoeurian journey of the revelation Julian's already-porous subjectivity is transformed to include the cosmos, heaven, and the Trinity itself. But at every stage the reader is invited to participate. The post-Ricoeurian lens that has focussed the foregoing study of the text on its capacity to transform Julian's subjectivity should also have drawn its attentive reader into the same transformative niche. Inasmuch as we, the readers, are prepared to engage performatively with the text, so we allow ourselves to be transformed as Julian is. Julian is the mirror-into-doorway to Christ: 'leve the behaldynge of the wrechid worme, synfulle creature, that it was schewyd vnto, and that ye myghtly, wyselye, lovandlye and mekelye be halde god' (ST p 219.4f); and she is everyman: 'alle that I sawe of my selfe, I meene in the persone of alle myne evynn cristene' (ST p 219.1).

Relating the Eighth Revelation to the Twenty-First Century Ecological Challenge

As with the study of Julian's wounds in the previous chapter, if the very act of reading Julian's account of the eighth revelation has had the effect of transforming the subjectivity of her reader to restore its porosity, then the question of the thesis is answered positively. In addition, from this Julian-led porosity, specific expressions of a restored ecological consciousness and emergent ecological niches can be made from the foregoing sections.

From the seventh revelation of twenty reversals of subjectivity we learn, through Julian's clear-sighted account, of an inexplicable experience of change to which no cause can be attributed and therefore no blame attached. The disconcerting changes in climate and in the other spheres of the Earth can be attributed to human action but not to the wickedness of some humans. Mostly they came about with the best of intentions and inasmuch as they are caused by greed, all of humanity shares in the responsibility for that greed. We are not living in an enemy narrative: if we were, since the enemy is all of us, the only adequate response would be to rid the Earth of humanity altogether. Quarrels about culpability simply detract from the action that is needed. Julian learns

right attitude of summoned porous self from the experience and that is what we have to learn in our encounter with the harm that has been done to the Earth.

Julian's close observation to the point of subjective participation in the dying, drying Christ, whose formerly life-giving blood dries him from within and cold wind dries him from without, who is identified with the Earth, can be translated into a close observation of the suffering creation as the waters dry up and the air becomes polluted. This careful looking leads to empathetic understanding, heartbreak, and a loving response.

From the Philippians quotation we gain the insight that the feeling that is in Christ is, or can be, in us. Christ identified as the cosmos is dying again through the ecological crisis. Less dramatically he dies and is reborn through the death and rebirth that is continuously taking place in nature. Our own sharing in that death and rebirth opens us to feeling the interaction inside ourselves and this in turn retunes us to the natural flow of nature, rendering it and us non-adversarial.

From Julian's granted wish to experience Christ's pains we learn that empathetic recognition of the ecological crisis means experiencing its pain but that pain, if not turned away from, is translated into love, and the response is greater love, not defensive fear.

From the passage describing Julian's mother trying to lock her eyes, and Julian's distress at the disconnection that would entail, we can derive an injunction not to close our eyes to the pain of creation. Through our clear seeing, love is learned.

The passage on the pain of Christ's mother that transformed into love, so that love energises the niche Julian has created, can open up a reflection on the nature of our response to the ecological crisis, as that of a loving mother, or perhaps of a memory of nature itself being nurturing like a mother.

The passage which establishes Christ's oneness with all creation, as attested by witnesses who are 'paynims', turns ecological damage into damage of Christ himself, while at the same time affirming the unbreakable love of God which sustains all creation.

The passage in which Julian chooses not to look away from the ‘vernacle’-ugly Christ on the Cross is critical to the porous ecological seeing she is helping us with. She has discovered, through that hard choice not to look away, the privy inward sight of divinity right there in the heart of the disfigured physical. So for us, the not turning away from the pain of creation, but looking at it deeply and contemplatively, generates a porous interaction which reveals its divine origin that will satisfy humanity in a way that consuming never will. We attend to materiality still, but not in order to consume it. The problem, as Heidegger saw, is not materialism (technology) but the way we approach materiality.

In the final passage on the Passion, pain, love and joy become the heart of the niche, the expression of Christ’s subjectivity, and they are deeply seen by Julian. There is a simple read across to the pain and joy of death and renewal that is constantly expressed by the Earth, which, seen through Julian’s eyes, is love in performative interaction as the cosmos is identified with Christ. The experience of childbirth carries the same porous qualities of pain and joy and love. An ecological consciousness from Julian might see the Earth not as an inert thing that is a backdrop for merely human dramas, but animated by the pain and joy and love of Christ, expressed in every movement of ‘rotting and renewal’ of the ecosystems of the Earth, as feminist eco-theologian Catherine Keller notices (2000 p 195).

The seeing of and meditation on the Resurrection of the bloody Christ still on the Cross whose pain is transformed into joy resonates with nature’s enactment of death and resurrection through the seasons in all species; moreover, ecosystems are complex performative interactions between creatures that kill and eat each other; also dead organisms bring new life in humus or compost. The new life is in the death and does not happen without it. A porous human response to this is to recognise that humanity participates in this ‘rotting and renewal’: we too must die to be (in Christian theology) resurrected; we eat and are eaten; our death can bring new life materially in, for example, organ donation but also with the ideas and good deeds, and above all the health of the planet, we leave behind us. The participation in death and new life can be intentionally beneficent.

The ecological consciousness that emerges from the porous subjectivity Julian has brought about in the eighth revelation can be summarised as transforming the enemy narrative in which we are living as *Gestell*, buffered selves into a greater narrative enacted by Christ's Passion and the natural rhythms of ecosystems. If there is an enemy in the ecological crisis it is all of humanity, so the logical response is to do away with humanity altogether. Julian's way is to learn porosity, that is to say, humility, from being presented with causeless weal and woe. The ecosystems of the Earth are full of weal and woe, as creatures eat and are eaten: nature is bloody. But the pattern of death and new life is embodied in the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ. By identifying, as closely as Julian did with Christ, with the 'rotting and renewal' of the Earth, we identify with a universal narrative and take our part in it. For us, now, that identification means suffering the ecological degradation of the Earth, as Julian suffered the degradation of the Passion. By not closing our eyes or looking away from the pain of the Earth, as Julian did not, the pain becomes suffused with love, love as great as that of a mother, which is the same as Christ's love. The pain and love are themselves suffused with joy in the new life of the Earth and the Resurrection.

CHAPTER SIX

The Fourteenth Revelation

Introduction

The fourteenth revelation is pressed from Julian's intense questioning about the nature of sin and the inexplicable paradox between what she has understood about it from holy church and as it is being shown in her revelations. Out of the paradox of these two accounts of sin comes an allegorical showing, which Julian calls an 'example', in which encounter is brought into porous participation in one character, the servant who is both Adam or everyman, and also Christ: the paradox and the encounter are embodied in one subjectivity. It is mysterious and provokes more questions, keeping the subjectivity of Julian and the reader porous. The revelation is a demonstration of the energy of encounter released by the asymmetry of Julian's refusal to explain away difference and in standing apparently mutually exclusive points of view, in this case about sin, together, releasing energy to flow between them and unblocking a fixed *Gestell* notion of control of one by the other or some kind of negotiated transactional stand-off which damages both or rather does not do justice to both. Julian's persistence with keeping paradox in porous proximity brings to birth hitherto unimagined niches. She thus embodies and creates the porous subjectivity that I have argued the ecological challenge calls humanity to. Inasmuch as the reader engages performatively with the text, that porosity could also be awakened in him.

The fourteenth revelation is complex and layered, as its initial, very simple showing — of a lord sending out his beloved servant, who runs in his eager obedience to fulfil the lord's will and falls into a chasm — is returned to again and again by a 'marvelling' Julian, who repeatedly brings it to life by re-inspecting its detail and making more transformative sense of it each time. This chapter will follow Julian in her deepening, ever more porous understanding, using the post-Ricoeurian framework as an aid. In Part I) the niche of the fourteenth revelation is established, exploring i) its origin in Julian's longing for seeing and knowing to become one; ii) the nature of the revelation as 'sight to Julian's understanding'; and iii) the first layer of seeing of the revelation. In

Part II) we learn as Julian learns the representative meaning of the servant as i) Adam and everyman; ii) as Christ; and iii) as enactive participant in the Trinity. In Part III) we explore with Julian the porous, performative and interactive character of the servant: i) whose subjectivity emerges from the fall; ii) whose performative interaction is gardening; and iii) whose subjectivity is represented by clothing and knitting. In Part IV) Julian is shown, and shows us, the restoration to which the revelation leads. As with the previous two chapters, the engagement of the reader with Julian's enquiry through the interactive power of her text should bring about the transformed subjectivity the ecological challenge requires; in addition, from each of the sections, proposals for a Julian-inspired ecological consciousness will be suggested in the concluding paragraphs.

Part I) Establishing the Niche of the Fourteenth Revelation

Introductory

This section will follow the narrative of the text, first exploring the way that the paradox of what Julian sees and what she knows evokes a powerful longing out of which the fourteenth revelation is pressed. It will then unpack her method as she describes it at this point, using post-Ricoeurian insights. Finally it will describe the first, puzzling layer of seeing of the revelation.

i) Julian longs for seeing and knowing to become one

Julian *knows* by the common teaching of holy church and by her own feeling that 'the blame of oure synnes contynually hangyth vppon vs' (LT p 511.10ff), from Adam's fall until doomsday. She *sees*, however, that God shows 'no more blame then if we were as clene and as holy as angelis be in hevyn' (LT p 511.14f). She recounts the paradox between what she sees and what she knows:

I *see* the that thou arte very truth

I *know* truly that we syn greuously all day and be moche blame wurthy

I may neyther leue the *knowyng* of this sooth

nor I *se* nott the shewyng to vs no manner of blame (LT pp 510.7ff, my italics).

Julian attributes her sense of this unfathomable and unsolvable paradox to her own ‘blyndnes’ (LT p 511.16). This attribution is characteristic of her method, and what we can gain from her: she understands not that there is something she does not believe and should believe that will explain away the paradox, rather, she understands that she cannot (yet) see all that there is to see. Thus she is greatly concerned that her revelations will cease and God will pass from her sight before she understands fully, leaving her ‘vnknowyng how he beholde vs in oure synne’ (LT p 511.18). For Julian the paradox is resolved in God’s sight: how God sees us in our sin will in turn teach her how to see what blame she may carry. So she remains in encounter, in her showings-niche, like the Koubova performance space (Koubova 2015), fixing her gaze inwardly on God: ‘my longyng endured, hym contynuantly beholdyng’ (LT p 511.22). She has made her niche dangerous: she *will* learn how to see sin by seeing how God sees sin, but if all she has seen so far is indicative, she will learn that which is counter to what she has learned from holy church. For if sin is as God seems to see it, which is to say, that he does not see it, then ‘we be no synners nor no blame wurthy’ (LT p 512.24). She must accept that, but she must be sure, because if she is wrong, she falls into error. Her imploring is heartfelt: ‘I cryde inwardly with all my myght, sekyng in to god for helpe’ and her question is urgent: ‘how shall I be esyde, who shall tell me and tech me that me nedyth to wytt, if I may nott at this tyme se it in the?’ (LT p 512.36ff).

The longing is a forceful, energetic, asymmetric insistence from Julian to God. The niche has been created through Julian’s longing, her refusal to turn away from the face of God which holds such paradox. We recall Koubova’s students at the beginning of the experiment, standing in the performance space with nothing to do, experiencing ‘extreme reactions (fight, flight, freeze, exhaustion)’ (Koubova 2015 p 65). Like the students, whose readiness to continue despite the extreme discomfort Koubova attributes to our wish not to act other than in a ‘coded way’ (p 65), Julian stays in the performance space of her revelations, refusing to go back, as it were, to the ‘coded way’ that holy church has taught her. Julian’s insistence on not denying what she sees is already drawing her into a changed subjectivity and niche; as McGann would have it, perception is

action so her seeing, and the seeing into which she draws her reader, is already a porous and interactive response (McGann 2015 p 22).

Persevering with this tension means that, ultimately, knowing and seeing will become one, and God wills it:

desyryng with all oure hart and alle oure strenght to haue knowyng of them [the properties of our soul] evyr more and more in to the tyme that we be fulfyllyd; for fully to *know* them and clerely to *se* them is not elles but endles joy and blysse that we shall haue in hevyn, whych god wyll we begynne here in knowyng of his loue' (LT pp 574.47ff, my italics).

The porosity between seeing and knowing 'oure owne soule' in order to have 'full knowynge of god' (LT p 573.32f) 'begynne here' even if it is only truly reconciled in 'hevyn': for our purposes it is an invitation to salvation from a *Gestell* subjectivity that is fixed in its knowing and not open to seeing new possibilities. The porosity into which Julian's and her reader's subjectivity is transformed is ongoing: the habit of porosity is a new niche, as Nicholas Watson puts it, the 'never-satiated process' (Watson 1992 p 100) of the unfolding of meaning of love. Julian understands that after all her revelations are finished, the showings would 'passe', leaving no 'sygne ne tokyn' (LT p 652.18ff). But she would return to them again and again, as 'Jhesu [...] shewde hyt all ageene within my soule, with more fullehed with the blessyd lyght of his precyous loue' (LT p 653.30ff).

ii) *Sight to her understanding: Julian's method*

The fourteenth revelation is the response to Julian's longing:

And then oure curteyse lorde answeyrd in shewyng full mystely by a wonderfull example of a lorde that hath a servannt, and gave me syght to my vnderstandyng of both (LT pp 513.2ff).

What Julian ‘knows’, having learnt it from holy church, will be changed by virtue of her allowing ‘syght to my vnderstandyng’. She sees the example is ‘wonderfull’: her (thus) wounded⁸² and hence porous self interacts with the showing, and by virtue of what it sees, which for Julian is being shown what God sees, her understanding changes. She sees both a ‘bodely lycknesse’ (LT p 514.8) and, as she is looking, God gives her ‘gostly vnderstandyng’ (LT p 514.9). She sees doubly, then, both the bodies of the actors in the revelation that is to be played out before her, and the seeing in her understanding of the meaning of what she is looking at. Julian is not, here, watching a scene that is played out *on* anything: we do not know if the crucifix is still being held before her eyes but if so, it is not an affordance in the niche of this fourteenth revelation. She is seeing the revelation internally, both the example itself and what is shown to her understanding of the meaning of what she sees. But her understanding does not come straightaway. As she watches with the same attention to detail that we see in the eighth revelation, so she is puzzled by many features. She is experiencing what Ricoeur would call a ‘semantic clash’, an ‘interaction between contexts’ that disorients the reader because the world of the parable does not make sense in the world of the reader (Ricoeur 1995 p 161). The semantic clash will give rise to a ‘progressive recognition’ (p 161) of the nature of salvation. The porousness of her subjectivity is evident in her readiness to see and describe what does not make sense: in Fantasia and colleague’s terms she is participating in ‘enactive sense-making’ (Fantasia, De Jaegher, and Fasulo 2015 p 113). As they would put it, her ‘mind’ emerges from the interaction as new domains are opened up in the interaction. This is how it is that Julian can come to see new worlds, and bring them to birth in her own writing so that her reader, too, can experience giving birth to meaning as he interacts with the narrator (Popova 2015 p 320).

Thus for Julian the enactive sense-making and progressive recognition continue for many years. She ‘culde nott take there in full vnderstandyng to my ees in that tyme’ (LT p 519.66f). There were too many strange aspects to what she saw. But her ‘techyng inwardly’ which she was

⁸² cf Rubenstein 2009 p 9; Scott 2014; see above fn 49.

given, quite precisely, ‘for twenty yere after the tyme of the shewyng saue thre monthys’ (LT p 520.86) was not taking her away from what she saw. She was taught to look in ever more detail at it. ‘[S]yght to my vnderstandyng’ came through steady and sustained looking, not through analysis or teaching to which the showing gave rise that would distract her from the showing itself. Julian has many levels of comprehension of the showing, and she returns again and again to what she saw to verify and deepen her understanding. The precise chronology of ‘twenty yere [...] saue the monthys’ implies that Julian experienced some kind of breakthrough in her understanding at that specific time. She writes of being showed the meaning of the example ‘in a touch’ (LT p 527.158), like Darwin’s precise memory of when and where he understood the importance of location in evolutionary theory (Darwin 1887/1958 p 120f), and like Koubova’s students, who stayed in the performative place of their experiment, allowing the time to discover the hidden subjectivity that turned out to be so creative. Her study over two decades bears fruit in herself and in her text, which attests to her obedience to the ‘techyng inwardly’ to look in ever greater detail at what she has been shown. She looks at everything: the way the lord sat, what he sat upon, what colour his clothes were and what they were like; his outer demeanour and what he was like inside; the way the servant stood, where he stood; the colour and shape of his clothing; his outward behaviour and his inward goodness.

As Julian had so closely observed, so in turn she gives her reader every possible detail of the vision; a practice which once again allows the reader to be as drawn performatively into the encounter as Julian herself was. We are to see for ourselves. Thus we, through her, are taught to ‘take hede to the propertes and the condescions that were shewed in the example, though the thyne that it be mysty and indefferent to thy syght’ (LT pp 520.87ff). What we then have is a layered account: the deceptively simple showing is recounted several times, each time taking us more deeply into its meaning. The effect on the reader is, with Julian, one of transformation through deepening participation, a gentle but inexorable, undeniable, effective rebirth into a new world born of seeing differently, seeing as God sees, over a long time, ‘progressively’, as Ricoeur would have

it, but still ‘explosively’ (Ricoeur 1995 pp 61, 161). What Julian learns through seeing over time is profoundly unsettling, turning upside down deeply held notions of blame and forgiveness. She thus embodies transformation and through language makes possible the reader’s transformation in turn.

iii) The first layer of seeing of the revelation

Julian first of all sees that the ‘lorde syttyth solempnely in rest and in pees’ while the servant ‘stondyth before his lorde, reverently redy to do his lordes wyll’ (LT p 514.9ff). Already, with the ‘reverent readiness’, there is a flow of energetic love from the servant to the lord. This is reciprocated: the lord ‘lokyth vppon his seruannt full louely and swetly and mekely’ (LT p 514.11f). The porous interconnection of this love and reverence is never broken; as we saw in Chapter Four, ‘loue’ and ‘reuerente drede’ are ‘bredryn’ (LT p 673.20). The love and reverent dread with which Julian sees her revelations, and which are revealed to her by her revelations, resonate as she sees the lord and the servant behold each other, their loving and interactive face to face encounter taking place in a niche pregnant with expectation.

For then the lord sends the servant ‘in to a certeyne place to do his wyll’. The servant does so, and the manner of his going is significant. He does not just ‘go’, but ‘sodenly he stertyth and rynnyth in grett hast for loue to do his lordes wyll’ (LT p 514.14f). He leaps into action, spurred by his love and reverence and willingness to obey. There is no break in the love that holds the lord and servant in their niche, no disobedient pride. On the contrary, it is the same love that causes the servant to start and run. Love could command no other response. And yet it is precisely this loving, eager response that is the cause of his fall, literally, into a deep crevasse: ‘anon he fallyth in a slade, and takyth ful grett sorow; and than he gronyth and monyth and wallowyth and wryeth’ (LT p 515.15f). If he had not run as he did, he would not have fallen: ‘oonly hys good wyll and his grett desyer was the cause of his fallyng’ (LT p 516.35f). There is no ‘defaughte’ in the servant, nor does the lord ‘assigne in hym any maner of blame’. The servant is as ‘vnlothfull and as good inwardly as he was when he stode before his lorde, redy to do his wyll’ (LT p 516.34ff). This, then, most

mysteriously, is what God sees when he sees us in our sin. Love and reverent dread are still ‘bredryn’, and the porous interconnectivity between the lord and the servant is not broken by the servant’s fall. The niche holds steady, by means of energetic love.

But this is not what the servant sees. He has fallen into a ‘slade’, and the ‘most myschefe’ in this, as Julian saw, was that he had fallen in such a way that his face was turned away from the lord. The face to face encounter was broken and so, for the servant, the energetic flow of love *felt* broken: ‘he culde nott turne his face to loke vppe on his lovyng lorde, whych was to hym full nere, in whom is full comfort’ (LT p 515.17ff). The servant cannot see his lord, so he cannot see how ‘thus contynuantly his loueyng lorde full tenderly beholdyth hym’ (LT p 516.38f). Again, the Koubova experiment is illustrative, as the initial experience of the students, standing for the first time in the performance space and not looking at their audience, entirely exposed with nothing to do and no interaction to guide what they might do, are nevertheless supportively attended to by the audience all the while. Despite the loving audience, the students felt a horrible chaotic lostness, ‘infinitely exposed’, demonstrating that ‘the isolation of the agent from the network provokes extreme reactions (fight, flight, freeze, exhaustion)’ (Koubova 2015 p 65). For the Koubova students, the experience of standing in the performance space, seen lovingly by their audience but not seeing that love and, in their fear and isolation, not knowing it either, exposed ‘the rigid ego identified with the mask’ (p 65) that is the persona worn in public. In the fall of the servant, although the love of the lord is unbroken, the servant’s experience of isolation and loss is a necessary stage in his journey to salvation, an utter undoing of all his certainties of selfhood and relationality, in who he thinks he is in relation to the lord. This was the journey of the Koubova students, the Ricoeurian explosion of their familiar world with its ‘rigid ego’ unlocking new and profound creative possibilities in a new and porous niche, and the transformation of the *Gestell* subjectivity of our twenty-first century selves, by implication, will involve a similar journey to a restored porosity. The servant will also be restored in a way unimaginable to him as he lies in his painful isolation.

The servant has fallen and he is helpless: ‘he may nott ryse nor helpe hym selfe by no manner of weye’ (LT p 515.16f). The lord’s loving gaze is not interactive without the returning gaze of the servant and the servant cannot be helped while he is thus disconnected. His troubles are manifold: he suffers ‘soore brosyng’; ‘hevynesse of his body’ and ‘fybylnesse’. The condition of fallenness is painful. But more than that, he was ‘blyndyd in his reson and stonyd in his mynde so ferforth that allmost he had forgeten his owne loue’ (LT pp 515.22ff). The damage is not just physical but mental and emotional. He cannot see the lord physically because of the way he has fallen, but he cannot see with his reason either, so that not only does he not know that the lord is still holding him in his loving gaze, he can barely remember the love in his own heart that generated his eager performance in response to the lord’s request. He is bereft of the energetic love between himself and the lord. For Julian, the experience of not being able to see what is there is the cruellest punishment of all, entirely different from her experience of not-seeing because something is not there. It is more akin to her horror (we imagine) at the prospect of her eyes being ‘lokked’ by her mother who thought she had died in the eighth revelation (ST p 234.30), threatening her with being cut off from her performative, loving gaze on the dying Christ. She and her reader may shudder for the lonely, blinded servant’s suffering, and thus we begin to experience in ourselves, rather than as objective teaching, the nature of sin.

The servant is also suffering, as Julian notices and marvels at, because he is by himself: he had ‘payne most mervelous to me, and that was that he leye aloone. I lokyd alle about and behelde, and ferre ne nere ne hye ne lowe I saw to hym no helpe’ (LT p 516.37ff). There is no other, not the loving lord and not any other other, to interact with. All the servant’s relational references are internal: ‘he entendyd to his felyng and enduryng in woo’ (LT p 515.21f), and they are all painful (LT p 515.22). There may be an implicit reference here to the Great Commandment to love God and neighbour (Matthew 22:37ff and parallels): neither part of the Commandment can be kept by the lonely servant now. It might be suggested that the feeling the servant has is what the buffered *Gestell* self has, mostly without realising it, as his *a priori* porosity and relationality of selfhood,

identified historically by Charles Taylor (2007) and neurologically by Leonard Schilbach and colleagues (2013), is denied. The enactivists note, based upon their research, how very extreme is the torture of solitary confinement of a prisoner. There is a pathological loss of a sense of self and of ‘realness’ (Gallagher 2015 p 407).⁸³ Fundamental relationality of the *ipse* self is cut. The servant in Julian’s example is in intense pain as his love finds no responding other in the place where he has fallen. The passage also resonates with John 12:24 where the grain of wheat ‘remains just a single grain’ unless it dies.

As Julian continues to watch, the niche of the fourteenth revelation expands from its focus on the fallen, lonely servant to include the ‘slade’ into which the servant has fallen as Julian is shown the features of the place where the servant fell. The ‘slade’ is ‘alang, harde and grevous’ (LT pp 515.20ff); ‘long’ meant in time as well as space, perhaps.

Julian continues to see the loving beholding of the lord, which has not faltered at any time, and which thus includes the fallen, lonely servant and the hellish place of his falling, holding the niche together. The loving beholding has two parts: the first, most obvious quality is its ‘grett rewth and pytte’ (LT p 516.40) that the servant should have taken such ‘harme and dysses’ in service of the lord, ‘yea, and for his good wylle’ (LT p 517.48f): reaffirming for Julian that the fall happened out of loving obedience, and that the lord knows this. The second way in which the lord looks is shown to Julian as an ‘inward goostely shewyng of the lord’s menyng’ (LT p 518.54). She sees that the lord knows that the servant will come to a great reward, all the greater for the falling. The servant cannot know this, but he will be ‘hyely and blessydfully rewardyd without end’, rewarded ‘aboue that he shulde haue be yf he had nott fallen’. The suffering itself would be transformed into ‘hye ovyrpassyng wurschyppe and endlesse blesse’ (LT p 518.57ff). The falling is necessary, or to use Julian’s word, ‘behovely’ (LT p 405.13), for the transformation. Thus while the niche is held together by the affordance of the lord’s unfailing love, the asymmetry that generates restoration comes from the feeling of separation and pain in the servant. The restoration will be interactive and

⁸³ See also Di Paolo and De Jaegher 2015 p 8 and Kyselo 2015 p 88.

mighty, all the greater for the suffering he is undergoing now. The journey to transformation seen here in the fourteenth revelation is illuminated by the experience of the Koubova students, the pain of whose solitary exposure, a ‘cruel and unusual punishment’ (Gallagher 2015 p 406), spurs them on to the next stages of the experiment, ultimately to knowing how to be face to face with the other in relaxed curiosity and playfulness, of which the supportive audience approves (Koubova 2015 p 67). The subjectivity of the servant, as we will see, will be pressed from the fall into a glorious restored porous ‘onyng’ with Christ.

Concluding summary

The fourteenth revelation is pressed from Julian’s urgent longing to understand sin as God does, before God withdraws as her revelations cease. The response that gives ‘sight to her understanding’ establishes the method of the revelation’s interpretation: it will transform Julian’s subjectivity and that of her reader. The revelation, at first sight, unfolds as a simple parable narrative of a loving lord, a fallen servant, and a location which is long, hard and grievous. The niche of the revelation is held by love; its interactive energy is generated by the asymmetry of the servant who is cut off from the love of the lord by the manner of his falling: he cannot see it; moreover he is alone. In this showing, Julian and her reader have the advantage of the fallen servant because we can see that the lord’s love is unbroken, and also that the pain is a necessary transformational step towards an almighty ‘endlesse blesse’.

Part II) The Meaning of the Servant Character

Introductory

This was as far as Julian could see at the time of the revelation: ‘at this poynt the shewyng of the example vanysschyd and oure good lorde ledde forth my vnderstandyng in syght and in shewyng of the revelacion to the ende’ (LT p 518.62ff), meaning that the fourteenth revelation ended and the final two revelations followed at this time. But it remained with her: ‘the marveylyng of the

example went nevyr fro me [...] and yet culde I nott take there in full vnderstandyng to my ees in that tyme' (LT p 519.65ff). Much about what she had seen puzzled her. It was an answer to her longing to understand sin; and she still did not understand. If the servant was Adam, there was much about him that did not fit 'syngell Adam' (LT p 519.69). She waits in uncertainty and unknowing, and so does her reader, because as Windeatt observes, Julian has not interpreted the revelation with the benefit of her later hindsight, 'partial insights have not been revised away' (Windeatt 2016 p xl). The meaning emerges, as she says, over 'twenty yere after the tyme of the shewyng saue thre monthys' (LT p 520.86), a lengthy *lectio divina* (Davies 1992) of the revelation which brings greater understanding, perhaps in a 'touch' (LT p 527.158), and she 'document[s her] journey towards understanding' (Windeatt 2016 p xl). Still following the narrative direction of the text, this section explores how Julian's understanding unfolds of the nature of the servant's subjectivity.

i) The servant is revealed as Adam and everyman

In her matured seeing of the example, Julian understands that the lord is God (LT p 521.99f) and the servant is indeed Adam, by which she understood that he is everyman: 'oone man was shewed that tyme and his fallyng to make there by to be vnderstonde how god beholdyth alle manne and his fallyng' (LT p 522.101ff). However, looking again at the fallen servant in the light of his being Adam, everyman, the paradoxical tension between what she sees and what she knows from holy church becomes even greater. She sees that in the falling, Adam was hurt and made feeble in body and reason, but not in his will, which continued to wish to obey God. Contrary to holy church, Adam in the example has not disobeyed God. Rather, his falling has happened because he obeyed God, and his wish to do that never changes. It is the feebleness from his falling that causes Adam to become blind to his own unchanged will: he is 'lettyd and blyndyd of the knowyng of this wyll' (LT p 520.108f). He has not stopped being the beloved servant of God. Only his perception is false. It is false not only in his blindness to his own unchanged will towards God, but also in his blindness

to God beholding him in unbroken love. Julian calls this the ‘begynnyng of techyng’, referring, we might suggest, both to the servant whose perception will be transformed, and to herself and her reader, starting again in her understanding of what sin is in God’s sight. In her, and our, intensely participative looking, the teaching of holy church is to be transformed. Merleau-Ponty argues that the interplay of perceiving and being perceived is generative, in the light of which Julian’s shifting perception is also changing her and our (and holy church’s) subjectivity. She is beginning to see as God sees us in our sin, and in so doing sees already that ‘oonly payne blamyth and ponyschyth’ (LT p 523.117); God does not punish.

And so Julian’s seeing deepens, taking us with her. We have observed the characteristics of the fallen Adam: bodily pain and heaviness; inability to move; stunned reason; solitude; long and bleak habitat; above all inability to see God’s loving gaze. These punish. God does not blame or punish. Looking at the revelation in the detail her ‘techyng inwardly’ requires, she sees the lord’s black eyes are full of ‘louely pytte’ (LT p 523.125). Inwardly he is ‘an heye ward long and brode’ (LT p 523.126), which carries the sense of a secure place of refuge, reinforcing the niche which has not been broken by the fall of Adam. His loving gaze is a steadfast longing, drawing us to him. Adam cannot see; but the subjectivity of Julian (and her reader) is beginning to be penetrated by God’s ‘louely lokyng’ which saw the servant continually in his falling, as Julian comments: ‘me thought it myght melt oure hartys for loue and brest them on twoo for joy’ (LT p 524.127ff). If, in our post-Ricoeurian ecological reading, the fallen servant is to be identified with the *Gestell*, buffered self that cannot change its harmful ways, this poetic language starts with ‘prevy touchynges’ (LT p 480.46) to prick its hardened selfhood, wounding it so that the buffered self lying alone becomes porous.

ii) *The servant is revealed as Christ*

Julian’s seeing-as-God-sees is a mixture (‘medelur’) of ruth and pity and also joy and bliss. ‘The pytty was erthly and the blysse hevynly’ (LT p 524.132f). The ruth and pity is for the falling of

Adam, Julian understands, but the joy and bliss are ‘of the fallyng of his deerworthy son’ (LT p 524.135f). This is the first mention of Christ in this revelation, and so it is at this point that Julian and her reader are introduced to the notion that, in the example, the servant is not only Adam but also Christ. This means that Christ’s ‘falling’ into the Incarnation is identical to Adam’s falling. And now some aspects of the example that had not made sense for ‘syngell Adam’ become clearer. The servant’s standing ready to do the lord’s will, his eager starting and running to obey his will out of great love for the lord, and the lord’s great love for the servant, settle happily into Julian’s (and our) understanding of the first two persons of the Trinity. For of course the Son willingly obeys the Father, taking on manhood and suffering even to death. That is what holy church teaches. The startling revelation is that Adam’s falling was out of loving obedience too. And so Julian looks again at the example. Is Adam’s falling identical to Christ’s? Is the subjectivity of Adam or everyman to be identified with Christ in *this* way? Our perception stands ready to be transformed further, and it will be, but first Julian concentrates, at this stage in her understanding of the example, on the nature of the porous love of the lord, whose gaze is brought to Earth by its identification with Christ. She has already learned that the lord is God (LT p 521.99f)

The lord’s ‘erthly pytty’ descends into the Earth through the falling of the Son ‘whyche is evyn with the fader’ (LT p 524.136). Hence, through the Son, God’s ruth and pity descends, conveyed through the ‘mercyfull beholdyng of his louely chere’. Christ brings the loving gaze to Earth, and not only to Earth but through Earth and into hell, keeping Adam ‘fro endlesse deth’ (LT p 525.139). Christ brings the loving gaze to Earth because Adam cannot turn his head to heaven to see it. In this loving response to Adam’s helpless blindness, Christ enters the Earth and his loving gaze is presented to Adam precisely where Adam is: on Earth. This ‘mercyfull beholdyng [...] fullyllyd all erth’ (LT p 524.137). The niche expands: the ‘slade’ is all Earth, and now Christ is identified with it.

Julian looks again at the lord who is God, and other details become puzzling: the lord sits ‘symply on the erth, bareyn and deserte, aloone in wyldernesse’ (LT p 523.120f), though he remains

inwardly a ‘heye ward’, which means he has not ceased to be the loving refuge of the niche. His ‘full semely’ countenance fixes its loving gaze, still, on the servant. Now that Julian can see his abode, she sees that it is no different from the lonely ‘slade’ in which the servant lies. She understands that his ‘syttynge on the erth, bareyn and desert’ means that he has taken his abode in ‘mannes soule’ (LT p 525.144ff), and in our post-Ricoeurian terms, is in porous interaction with humanity. God chooses to dwell in man’s soul, to take on the embodiment of man, and God himself is thus identified with the Earth:

[O]ure kynde fader wolde haue dyght hym noon other place but to sytt vpon the erth, abydyng man kynde, whych is medlyd with erth (LT p 526.149ff).

Through Christ, enactive participation will take place. The transformation in man is to *see* this, but to see it in Julian’s participative and penetrating manner, not as a theory. As Julian puts it, ‘I saw that my vnderstandyng was led in to the lorde’ (LT p 527.158f). Julian and her reader are in the performative, participative niche. Julian sees that the lord is enjoying himself, because he is restoring his servant. But she still marvels, which has the effect of keeping her subjectivity wounded and porous to deeper understanding. She too is in asymmetric enactive participation, and by her language, which expresses wonderment, not explanation, so is her reader. We are being shown things that continue not to make sense.

iii) The servant takes his place in the Trinity

The post-Ricoeurian approach we have been using to understand the text now draws us with Julian into an interpretation of the nature of the Trinity itself, by means of the fall of Adam. The servant is both Adam, that is, everyman, and Christ: ‘in the servant is comprehendyd the seconde person of the trynyte [...] whych is evyn with the fader’ (LT pp 532.210ff), and ‘in the seruannt is comprehendyd Adam, that is to sey all men’ (LT p 532.212). The servant is both the Son, which is the Godhead, and Christ’s manhood which is ‘ryghtfull Adam’ (LT p 533.215). The servant is near to the lord: that is because he is the Son of the lord; the servant stands to the left of the lord: that is

because he is Adam. The ‘evyn loue whych is in them both’ is the ‘holy gost’ (LT p 533.217f). We understand that the lord, the servant, and the love that activates their porous subjectivity is the Trinity, and Adam, too, participates in the Trinity, because where the Son is, there is Adam. ‘When Adam felle godes sonne fell’ (LT p 533.218f); there is no temporal or spatial distance. With the falling of Adam comes the falling of the Son: this is their participative interactivity. As Andy Clark noticed, interaction is non-linear (Clark 2011 p 73). Laroche and colleagues emphasise the spatial and temporal spontaneity of interaction: ‘being together is neither mere co-presence in the physical space, nor a mere temporal correlation of activities in the physical time that can be observed from an external point of view. It is the co-regulated and skilful inhabitation of the complex, metastable, dynamical landscape that emerges spontaneously from the meeting of our embodied perspectives’ (Laroche, Berardi, and Brangier 2015 p 51). Being together has to be enacted.

The oneness of Adam and Christ is made in heaven, before time, for all eternity:

[F]or the ryght onyng whych was made in hevyn, goddys sonne myght nott be
separath from Adam, for by Adam I vnderstond alle man (LT p 533.219ff).

With the ‘sterting and running’ of the fall comes Adam’s fall from life to death and into hell; and so comes God’s Son’s fall ‘with Adam’. Christ also falls into the ‘slade’; but his ‘slade’ is Mary’s womb. He ‘falls’ into embodiment: into ‘the feyerest doughter of Adam’ (LT pp 533.221ff). Both Adam and Christ ‘fall’ as one man. It is the interactive participation, the energy between the Son and Adam, that determines the subjectivity of both. If this falling is characterised as sin, then sin, if that is the word for it, is in the Trinity.

Concluding summary

The subjectivity of the servant has emerged, through Julian’s and her reader’s performative sense-making of the revelation, as Adam, everyman, and the Son, dynamically interacting in the Trinity. The performative participation of the (now much more interesting) Trinity includes Julian and her reader, because Adam is everyman, and ‘oure good lorde shewed his owne son and Adam but one

man' (LT p 534.228f). In as much as he is wise and good, he is Christ. In as much as he wears poor clothing and stands at the left hand side of God he is Adam, 'with alle the myschefe and febylnesse that folowyth' (LT p 534.227f). The 'vertu and the goodnesse' that we have is of Christ; the febilnesse and blyndnesse' is of Adam (LT p 534.229ff). The servant has both; Julian and her reader have both. Our subjectivity emerges from the participative interaction of the two 'partys'.

Part III) The Servant is Porous, Performative and Interactive

Introductory

This section penetrates with Julian deeper into the mystery of the fourteenth revelation, revealing first, that the subjectivity of the servant is porous and relational in that i) it emerges from the fall which is both the fall of Adam/everyman and the fall of Christ into Mary's womb; ii) the work of the servant as Adam/everyman and as Christ is performative: it is gardening; and iii) his subjectivity can be expressed and understood interactively in the clothing that he wears, and the 'knitting' or weaving of which the cloth is made.

i) The subjectivity of the servant emerges from the fall

Julian has understood that the lord and the servant and the love between them represent the Trinity. Because the servant is indivisibly both everyman as well as Christ, we too are included in the Trinity. Our participation is enacted by the starting, running and falling of the servant. Julian separates them, seeing that the *starting* represents the Godhead of Christ, and the *running* is the manhood of Christ. Both then *fall* as one servant, whose subjectivity is both that of Adam and of Christ. The falling is the pain of the Incarnation and Passion, pain felt materially, as a human. 'The sore that he toke was oure flessch, in whych as sone he had felyng of dedely paynes' (LT p 540.280ff). Christ must fall into the womb of a daughter of Adam; his interpenetration of the Earth explodes humanity's blindness and feebleness, and the narrative changes, or rather is restored; because if Christ is to fall into the maiden's womb then Adam must fall into the 'slade' of blindness:

this is the story. Adam and Christ are one, but the participative enactive encounter has to take place for the oneness to be realised: ‘yett the redempcion and the agayne byeng of mannekynde is nedfull and spedfull in every thyng’ (LT p 556.24f).

The falling is painful: the servant in the ‘slade’ suffers dreadfully. So does Christ suffer till we come to him, as a later passage indicates: like Adam the servant in the ‘slade’, Christ the servant ‘abydyth vs, monyng and mornyng’ (LT p 710.26). The text indicates the ‘monyng and mornyng’ is felt by us, but it is Christ in us who feels it. The suffering in the ‘slade’ goes on until we are restored: ‘it passyth nevyr fro Crist tylle what tyme he hath brought vs oute of alle our woo’ (LT p 711.30f). Dramatically, but unsurprisingly, the ‘walowyng and wrythyng, gronyng and monyng’ (LT p 541.294) that the servant in the example suffers in the ‘slade’ is unto death. He ‘myght nevyr ryse all myghtly fro that tyme that he was fallyn in to the maydyns wombe tyll his body was sleyne and dede’ (LT pp 541.295ff). This is the end of the suffering, and not before. Like the grain that is sown in the earth and dies in order to be reborn (John 12:24), the servant-Son must die. The participative porosity is culminatory: just as everything in the Earth, including humanity, dies, so does Christ.

The asymmetric desire that energises the performative interaction of the fall is expressed in ‘longing and desiring’: this creates the way. Heaven longs and desires (LT p 538.259f) and so does the Earth: ‘[a]nd all that be vnder hevyn, whych shall come theder, ther way is by longyng and desyeryng’ (LT p 538.260f). The same longing is felt by the servant both as the Son and as Adam: ‘whych desyeryng and longyng was shewed in the seruant stondyng before the lorde, or ellys thus in the son stondyng afore the fadyr in Adam kyrtyll’ (LT p 538.261ff). The longing and desiring of humanity is held together in Christ’s subjectivity: ‘For Jhesu is in all that shall be safe, and all that shall be safe is in Jhesu, and all of the charyte of god, with obedience, mekenesse and paciens and vertuous that longyth to vs’ (LT p 538.265ff). God himself wills it: ‘[T]he fader lefte his owne son wylfully in the manhed to suffer all mans payne without sparyng of hym’ (LT p 541.287f). The longing that brings about the participative encounter, felt by Julian as she lay face to face with

Christ on the Cross in her eighth revelation, is felt in all heaven and all the Earth, distilled in the second person of the Trinity who stands from all eternity waiting to do the will of the Father: ‘Thus was he the servant before hys comyng in to erth, stondyng redy before the father in purpos tyll what tyme he wolde sende hym’ (LT p 535.234ff), starting and running to enact that will, taking no thought for himself as he falls into the ‘slade’ and suffers the terrible pain of the Incarnation and Passion.

Julian’s urgent wish to understand how God sees our sin is answered by the porous subjectivity of the servant. God *cannot* blame us: ‘thus hathoure good lorde Jhesu taken vpon hym alloure blame; and thereforeoure fader may nor wyll no more blame assigne to vs than to hys owne derwurthy son Jhesu Cryst’ (LT p 535.232ff). Christ stood waiting to do the will of the Father, waiting for the time he would be sent: salvation was written into the narrative from the beginning. The cosmos was born to be saved. ‘In his forseying purpos, that he wolde be man to saue man in fulfylling the wyll of his fader’ (LT p 535.239f). For this reason, ‘so’, he ‘sterre and run’ to fall into the maiden’s womb, taking no thought for all the pain that would ensue, pain which Julian has herself undergone in the eighth revelation and knows full well. The fall is performative participation. Critically and paradoxically, though the falling is the blinding of Adam, it is also by virtue of the falling that our eyes are opened, so seeing can be identified with salvation:

the lownesse and mekenesse that we shall get by the *syght* ofoure fallyng [...]
therby we shall hyely be reysyd in hevyn, to whych rysyng we myghte nevyr haue
comyn without that mekenesse. And therfor it nedyth vs to *see* it (LT pp 603.28ff, my
italics).

The subjectivity of the servant is called into being by the fall. The servant is both Christ and everyman; thus is our humanity drawn into the divine dynamic love of the Trinity. The fall is the narrative written into all eternity. It is ‘behouely’ (LT p 405.13); as Denys Turner (2011) observes,

it has a necessary place in the story.⁸⁴ It is painful and long lasting; it is suffered by the Trinity inasmuch as it is suffered by humanity. It is not the result of disobedience; on the contrary, the fall happens because of the eager obedience of Christ and everyman and the desiring and longing of all of heaven and Earth. It comes out of a ‘single willing’ (Turner 2011 p 118).

ii) The servant’s performative interaction is gardening

As Julian’s gaze widens to see that the place that the lord sat was ‘symply on the erth, bareyn and deserte, aloone in the wildernesse (LT p 523.120f), she notices that the lord sits ‘as a man’, with ‘neyther meet nor drynke wher with to serue hym’ (LT p 530.188ff), at which she marvels. She marvels secondly that he only had one servant, whom he sent out (LT p 530.190). In this iteration of her seeing she also understands that there was ‘a tresoure in the erth whych the lorde lovyd’ (LT p 529.185), and that that is what the servant is sent to bring to the lord. The treasure in the Earth is what pulls the servant into his hasty, disastrous, redemptive, sight-clearing errand. The treasure is not a thing that sits upon the Earth: it has to be dug for. It is the fruit of gardening, and so the labour that the servant is sent to do is gardening; and it is hard work, ‘the hardest traveyle that is’ (LT p 530.193). The servant:

shuld be a gardener, deluyng and dykyng and swetyng and turnyng the erth vp and down, and seke the depnesse and water the plantes in tyme. And in this he shulde contynue his traveyle, and make swete flodys to rynne and nobylle plentuousnesse fruyte to spryng (LT pp 530.193ff).

The detail of the work to be done connects the servant with the Earth, not just as someone who took his place upon the Earth, but who entered fully into its substance, transforming it by his work. The post-Ricoeurian triad of performative interactivity is fully at play, as the niche of a tended, fruitful garden is created out of active engagement, generated by the love of the lord for ‘a tresoure in the

⁸⁴ ‘[S]in is behovely means that sin is needed as part of the plot — or, if you like, that the plot needs sin in the way that plots do — contingently indeed, but all the same just so’ (Turner 2011 p 51).

erth' and the willingness of the servant to bring it to him. The participative labour of gardening continues until the 'mett with the dryngke' are ready, and they can then be brought before the lord:

And he shulde nevyr turne ageyne, tyll he had dyghte this mett alle redy, as he knew
that it lykyd to the lorde; and than he shulde take thys mett with the dryngke, and
bere it full wurschypplly before the lorde (LT p 531.198ff).

Julian sees that the lord 'hath within hym selfe endlesse lyfe and all manner of goodnes' (LT p 532.204f) but he did not have 'the tresure that was in the erth' (LT p 532.205). Although the foregoing passage depicts the lord *sitting* in a wilderness which the servant then tends, the following seems to imply that the wilderness to be dug is *in* the lord: The 'tresure' the lord seeks is 'groundyd *with in* the lord in mervelous depnesse of endlesse loue' (LT p 532.205f, my italics). Until that time, Julian sees, the lord '*was* ryght noght but wyldernysse' (LT p 532.205ff, my italics), not that he was *in* a wilderness. On this reading the garden to be tended and transformed is, mysteriously, the lord himself, who is thus clearly identified with the Earth. More mysteriously, Julian writes that the 'tresure' is to be brought 'in hym selfe present' (LT p 532.205ff).⁸⁵ On this reading, it could be understood that the lord identifies with the wilderness to be tended, and the fruit of the tending is the servant: the Son is born out of the Father by means of the fall. However the Earth is to be understood, its fruit is worship to the lord who treasures it, and it is the servant who is to dig for it. Performative interaction is needed to activate the triadic flow, and that comes in the responsive service of the lord, by the servant, through gardening the Earth.

As Barry Windeatt notices, in this revelation, tending the Earth is not a curse, as it is in postlapsarian Genesis. Nature is benign (Windeatt 2015 p xli). But the second creation story in Genesis has the *prelapsarian* Adam 'tilling and keeping' the Garden (Genesis 2:15). We are out of time: the example simply shown leaves no space for the servant to do any gardening between starting, running and falling, so in Julian's sense-making, the servant's 'dyghting' is neither just

⁸⁵ Colledge and Walsh wonder if this is a scribal error (Colledge and Walsh 1978 p 532.208 fn), but both Paris and Sloane MSS are in agreement with what is here.

Adam's prelapsarian 'tilling and keeping', nor is it just the (postlapsarian) hard labour he is condemned to, having fallen into the 'slade'. The example turns the niche of prelapsarian paradise inside out: the lord sat in the midst of, is identified with, hellish wilderness which the *servant* turns into a garden.

The gardening motif recurs as Julian describes the fall of the servant into Mary's womb and ultimately to death. In the eighth revelation the point of death is not seen: Julian looked with all her might and did not see it. In this parabolic fourteenth revelation the 'body ley in the graue tyll Easter morow' (LT p 542.302) but while the body lay thus, 'he beganne furst to show his myght' (LT p 542.299). This passage resonates again with John 12:24. In death (and only in death) is new life made possible. Christ in death delved deep into the Earth, as the gardener seeking to produce for the lord's pleasure and food the fruit of his gardening, and found the root that was in hell: 'he reysyd vppe the grett root oute of the depe depnesse, whych ryghtfully was knyt to hym in hey hevyn' (LT p 542.300ff). Whereas in the eighth revelation Julian had been shown hell as that place only where the pain is worse than that of the Passion, because in hell 'ther is dyspyer' (LT p 365.58), now that despair is exploded by the interpenetration of Christ the gardener, even there where the 'grett root' was, deep within the Earth.

The post-Ricoeurian analysis foregrounds the performative interaction of subjects porous to each other in a joint project in a specific location. The scene is an enactment of McGann's 'behaviour settings' (McGann 2015 p 24) in which the environment is changed because of the enactive participation that takes place: the lord's desire and lack of fulfilment without the Earth being tended; the servant starting and running to tend it; and the tilled Earth that brings forth fruit which is Adam's release from hell, because of participative interaction. The Earth is not just a place where the lord sits but a dynamic affordance in a new niche. Laroche and colleagues would argue that embodiment, which with Julian we can call the Incarnation, arises from this 'agent-world' coupling (Laroche, Berardi, and Brangier 2015). For Laland and Sterelny, the dynamic embodiment that is the niche created by self in encounter, that is to say the tended Earth, 'is done

when energy is made to flow' (Laland and Sterelny 2006 p 1759). Embodiment, Incarnation, is 'worked out' (Fantasia, De Jaegher, and Fasulo 2015). The self is summoned to an interaction that is necessary to the completeness of God. In the eighth revelation Julian was in participative interaction with the Christ on the Cross before her dying eyes; in the fourteenth revelation the interactive porosity is between Julian and her mystifying example; between the lord and the servant in the example; and between Christ and the Earth all the way down to hell. Christ's 'digging' brings the Earth and hell transformatively into the Trinity.

The Earth that is the face of Christ gazing lovingly upon Adam ('the mercyfull beholding of his louely chere fullyllyd all erth' (LT p 524.136f)) is made delightful to God when it is gardenened. The Incarnation is enacted through gardening; the interactive participation of serving the lord is performed through gardening. Gardening ultimately brings about salvation as its digging is as deep as hell.

iii) The servant's subjectivity as clothing and knitting

Clothing and knitting are important metaphors for Julian, acting as affordances in the niche of the fourteenth revelation and effectively expressing the participative interaction of the servant as Adam and Christ. The servant who is the Son wears Adam's 'olde kyrtyll' (LT p 543.305). The kirtle resembles the torn and broken flesh Julian had seen so clearly in the eighth revelation (LT p 541.288ff). Adam is 'knyt' to Christ (LT p 542.301). The clothing of the lord expresses his steadfastness (LT p 526.153). When the servant-Son is restored in the Trinity, his clothes are 'rychar than was the clothyng whych I saw on the fader' (LT p 543.308).

Julian marvels because the servant stands before the lord with an inner and and outer character that do not tally. Outwardly the servant is 'clad symply' and he stands on the inferior left side. He is as a labourer, 'dysposyd to traveyle' and his clothing is a white tunic that is short, old, and stained with his sweat. It is ready to be hitched up for work. It will be 'raggyd and rent' (LT pp 527.165ff). Julian is experiencing another Ricoeurian 'semantic clash' where the events, what she

sees, do not fit the semantic code of her own overarching narrative (Ricoeur 1995 p 161). Ricoeur is writing of Gospel interpretation, which he argues is not just a matter of reading a simple account of the life, ministry and death of Christ, but of a progressive recognition of him as Christ. It is ‘the communicating of an act of confession — and the reader is in turn rendered *able to recognise*’ (Ricoeur 1995 p 161, my italics). So we can understand the effect on Julian and her reader of the semantic clash of the clothing, which she is prepared to sit with for nearly two decades, to look at and puzzle over as she is slowly ‘rendered able to recognise’ the meaning of the example. She ‘marvelyd gretly, thynkyng: This is now an vnsemely clothynge for the seruante that is so heylly lovyd to stond in before so wurschypfull a lord’ (LT p 528.171ff). We can surmise from her tone that, in Julian’s inherited niche, great lords are served by well-dressed servants, so in the example the servant should, she believes, be far better dressed if he is to serve the lord, and is to enjoy such proximity to him. The semantic clash requires an interaction between contexts and is a driver for the dynamic asymmetric participative encounter that changes subjectivity. The servant’s outward clothing makes it seem as though he had been ‘a contynuant laborer and an hard traveler of long tyme’ (LT p 529.181f); but his inward ‘wysdom’ (LT p 528.175) is that he is to respond for the first time to the will of the lord: a ‘new begynnyng for to traveyle, whych servannt was nevyr sent out before’ (LT p 529.188f). The semantic clash deepens. Not only does the servant not fit the clothes, neither do his actions. He is wearing an old and dirty kirtle, and yet inwardly he is as if he had never worked before. His labour is new.

As it becomes clear to Julian that the servant is not ‘syngell Adam’ (LT p 519.69) but also the Son, she understands that Christ takes on the filthy clothes of humanity and the Earth itself. The clothing starts to make some sense. The kirtle was white because it was flesh; it was single with no other clothing because there was ‘noght between the godhede and the manhede’. It was ‘strayght’ because of ‘povyrté’; old because it was worn out by Adam’s wearing. The ‘defautyng’ is the sweat of Adam’s labour, and it was short because the servant is a labourer: that is what Christ becomes. Christ takes on these characters: ‘thus I saw the sonne stonde, seyng in his menyng: Lo, my dere

fader, I stonde before the in Adams kyrtylle' (LT pp 535.244ff). Christ is as closely identified as it is possible to be with humanity in his performative interaction of vesting himself in Adam's kirtle. But his porous subjectivity extends beyond humanity. 'I wolde be in the erth', the servant declares, 'to thy worschyppe' (LT p 537.250). Julian has seen that the new labour, the 'worschyppe' to which he will be directed is gardening. The transformation is brought about by participative subjectivity: Christ takes on the materiality of the Earth as his clothing and as he gardens, he turns the earth (soil), himself, to God.

Julian returns to the servant's clothing later in her analysis to understand more deeply its meaning and significance in the revelation. Now she sees that not only is the clothing indicative of humanity's labour transformed by Christ into worship of the lord, its torn and ragged nature also indicates the tender rent flesh of Christ at the Passion. The kirtle is also the torn flesh of Christ:

By that his kertyll was at the poynt to be ragged and rent is vnderstond the roddys
and the scorgys, the thornes and the naylys, the drawyng and the draggyng, his
tendyr flessch rentyng, as I saw [in the eighth revelation] in some party (LT p
541.288ff).

Her language vividly recalls the exquisite suffering of the Passion, which she herself had so interactively experienced:

The flessch was rent fro the head panne, fallyng on pecys vnto the tyme the bledyng
feilyd; and than it beganne to dry agayne, clevyng to the bone (LT p 541.291ff).

The great cost of the servant's starting, running and falling in the example becomes evident as Julian understands the full implications for Christ's subjectivity of Adam's kirtle.

The clothing motif identified as the rent flesh of Christ becomes a means to draw Julian, together with her reader, into performative interaction, as she uses the metaphor to explain how it is that 'oure substance' is in God (LT p 562.17). As we saw in the study of the eighth revelation, Julian describes the drying of Christ's body as he died on the Cross as 'hangyng vppe in the eyer as men hang a cloth for to drye' (LT p 363.39f). This in turn recalled her reflections on the first

revelation of the bleeding head of Christ, in which she is shown ‘gostly’ that God is ‘oure clothing, that for loue wrappeth vs and wyndeth vs, halseth [embraces] vs and all becloseth vs, hangeth about vs for tender loue, that he may never leue vs’ (LT p 299.4ff). The ‘beclosing’ is how our participative subjectivity relates to God: he beclothes and is beclothed by us:

And I sawe no dyfference between god and oure substance, but as it were all god; and yett my vnderstandyng toke that oure substance is in god, that is to sey that god is god and oure substance is a creature in god [...] We be closyd in the fader, and we be closyd in the son, and we are closyd in the holy gost. And the fader is beclosyd in vs, the son is beclosyd in vs, and the holy gost is beclosyd in vs, all myght, alle wysdom and alle goodnesse, one god, one lorde (LT pp 562.17ff).

The Trinity is both enclothing us and enclothed by us. The interactive participation is porous and denies any separation of materiality from divinity: where materiality is, there the Trinity is, in constant interactive participation. Here again is Julian’s ‘pervasive spatial discourse of enclosing and of a mutual indwelling — simultaneously enfolding and being enfolded’ (Windeatt 2016 p xxvii). Julian’s language, born of her own participative interaction, invites the same porosity with her reader; as Davies observes, she is able to communicate a world not as something to be referred to but to be ‘shared’ (Davies 2017 p 16). Because Christ has entered the Earth, the beclosing is with all materiality, and so the language effects a Taylorian re-enchantment of the Earth, experienced by the porous self (Taylor 2007).

Clothing is made from ‘knitting’ or weaving, and ‘knyttyng’ in Julian, a metaphor she uses extensively, makes the clothing itself porous. So not only do we have the porous subjectivity of Trinity, everyman, the Earth and hell explained by means of clothing, now the clothing itself is deconstructed, only to increase and bring together more closely the performative interactive porosity. Our subjectivity is enacted in the close interweaving of thread or wool out of which the cloth is made: ‘this deerworthy soule was preciously knytt to hym in the making, whych knott is so suttell and so myghty that it is onyd in to god’ (LT p 560.59ff). Here Julian distinguishes between

the 'soule [which] is 'made of nought' (LT p 558.41), that is to say, it is unmade, and our body, which is made from 'the slyme of the earth, whych is a mater medelyd and gaderyd of alle bodely thynges' (LT p 558.43f). But God is knit into both: 'oure kynde, whych is the hyer party, is knytte to god in the making, and god is knytt to oure kynde, whych is the lower party in oure flessch taking (LT pp 577.17ff). The flesh interacts with 'all bodely thynges' of which the Earth is made; thus is God knit into all bodily things.

The renting of the cloth/flesh of the Passion tears apart the knitted knots as the gardener digs and turns the Earth and Adam falls into the 'slade'. This is necessary for our 'agayne beyng': 'nott withstanding this ryghtfull knyttyng and this endlesse onyng, yett the redempcion and the agayne byeng of mannekynde is nedfull and spedfull in every thyng' (LT p 556.23ff).

The knitting and the onyng are expressions of love: 'in the knyttyng and in the onyng he is oure very tru spouse and we his lovyd wyfe and his feyer meydyn, with whych wyfe he was nevyr displeyd; for he seyth: I loue the and thou louyst me, and oure loue shall nevyr parte in two (LT p 583.14ff). Thus, as Windeatt observes, is sensual being dignified and materiality taken seriously (Windeatt 2015 p xxviiff).

Just as in the eighth revelation the face of Christ changed into one of blyssefulle chere, there on the Cross as the culmination of the 'vernacle'⁸⁶-ugly Passion, so in the culmination of the fourteenth revelation the same filthy kirtle, Adam's kirtle, is 'made feyer, new, whyt and bryght, and of endlesse clenness, wyde and seyde', recalling the Transfiguration: the transformation of Christ is not away from or other than his Earthly ministry. Because of the profound interaction of Christ with Adam and all the Earth, as the kirtle is changed, so the subjectivity of Christ and Adam and all the Earth is changed.

⁸⁶ Another piece of cloth, of course (LT p 331.65).

Concluding summary

In these deepening insights into the lord and servant revelation, Julian performatively and porously makes meaning out of the servant as one whose *a priori* relational subjectivity re-emerges from the starting, running and falling of Adam/everyman and Christ, such that her own subjectivity and that of her reader are transformed by this seeing. She explores and makes sense of the lord's wish for the fruit of gardening, with the lord participating in the work as it takes place in him, identifying him with the Earth which is tended by the servant; transforming his subjectivity of barren dryness into love which has to be dug for. The gardening is unto death, resonating with John 12:24. Finally Julian makes performative sense of Adam's kirtle as Christ's identification with everyman and the Earth, and in his flesh torn at the Passion in which she had participated, drawing her reader, too, into the porous interaction.

Part IV) Restoration

Culmination and transformation

The culmination of the fourteenth revelation example is displayed in the visible transformation of all the parts. Adam's kirtle becomes as white as the transfigured Christ of the Gospels. The Earth is tilled and kept. God is worshipped. Now at the last the lord sits not on the barren Earth but is restored to 'his ryche and noblest seat' (LT p 543.313): the implication is that the Earth itself is transformed, participating in the restoration to become a seat worthy of the lord. God's subjectivity is seen to have changed. He made his seat 'to his lyking' (LT pp 543.313f), as though the seat was not there before the servant's transformative fall into death brought the fruit of the deep root in hell before him. He could, or would, not move from the barren Earth until it had been tilled and kept by his Son, Adam, everyman, and then there was no need to move, because now the niche includes heaven, Earth and hell, but the three are in one, represented in Adam's transformed kirtle. The Son no longer stands as a servant, hardly clothed, 'in perty nakyd' but 'ryghte rychely clothyd in blyssefull largenesse' (LT p 544.316). There is a crown upon his head of 'precyous rychenes' (LT p

544.317). This, sees Julian, is us: ‘it was shewede that we be his crowne’ (LT p 544.317f). The crown of the Son is humanity: the ‘faders joy’, the ‘sonnes wurshyppe’ and the ‘holy gostys lykyng’ and to all that are in heaven ‘endlesse mervelous blysse’ (LT p 544.318f).

The final seeing of this revelation is a niche that resembles a montage. The Son stands no longer on the left as a labourer but sits on the father’s right hand side, representative of being ‘ryght in the hiest nobylyte of the faders joy’ (LT p 545.326). The Son’s spouse, Mary, ‘feyer mayden of endlesse joy’ (LT p 545.328) is there, in peace and not in pain. The montage niche extends into something our imaginations find hard to picture, effecting a Daviesian ‘shared world’ (Davies 2017 p 16) as we recognise that we, too, are included in the family portrait. ‘Now syttyth the son, very god and very man, in his cytte in rest and in pees’, which is assigned (‘dyghte’) to him by his father, ‘of endlesse purpose’ (LT p 545.328ff). The city in which the Son sits is our sensual being: ‘that wurschypfull cytte that oure lorde Jhesu syttyth in, it is *oure sensualityte*, in whych he is enclosyd; and oure kyndly substance is beclosyd in Jhesu’ (LT p 572.23ff, my italics) and later: ‘oure good lorde opynnyd my gostely eye and shewde me my soule in the *myddys of my harte* [...] I vnderstode that it is a wurschypfulle cytte, in the myddes of that cytte sitts oure lorde Jhesu, very god and very man’ (LT p 639.2ff, my italics). Time is not linear: the Son sits in man’s soul for all time, having gardened the barren Earth to find and save him, all in the purpose of God for all time. The Father is in the Son in the city; the Holy Ghost is in the Father and in the Son, all in the midst of the city that is our soul and our sensual being that is in heaven and in Earth, God and humanity together in the Son.

Concluding summary

As the persons of the Trinity take their rightful places in Julian’s restored niche the sensual being of humanity and all the Earth take their places too, included in the porous subjectivity of the continuous dance of loving interaction of the culminatory montage.

Relating the Fourteenth Revelation to the Twenty-First Century Ecological Challenge

As with the previous two chapters that have studied the Julian texts, the real gift from Julian to our twenty-first century *Gestell* selves is the transforming effect on our subjectivity of, in this case, her penetrating understanding of the fourteenth revelation. If the ecological challenge is fundamentally caused by a buffered and *Gestell* subjectivity, Julian can spring the trap of our enslavement to that way of being and thus of seeing, by recalling us to our porosity. Everything follows from that.

We can also take from the foregoing passages some examples, led by Julian, of what it means to see from a porous rather than a *Gestell* subjectivity: an emerging ecological consciousness for a new possible niche in which humanity lives with the Earth without harming it.

On to Julian's deep longing out of which the fourteenth revelation emerges (of Part I) i), we can map our paradox of today: what we *know* as *Gestell* selves is threatened by what we *see* happening to the Earth. What we know of the life we take for granted is not sustainable, but how do we address the dilemma? It cannot be solved transactionally. The Earth cannot be part of a trade-off within a policy based upon the benefit-cost ratio. Following Julian, we do not solve the dilemma. Instead we address it by not turning away from what we see but demanding to understand the paradox; she with Christ, we with the environment, allowing herself and ourselves to be taught, in order to change what we *know*. We keep looking without closing the subject.

From Part I) ii) on Julian's method of 'sight to her understanding' in this revelation we can derive a similar discipline of patient looking and looking again at the natural world. The more we observe the natural world, the more extraordinary it is. An exploitative attitude, seeking to use the natural world for the ends of humanity, will try to make immediate sense of it in order to use it. Julian's way is slow and receptive. Sense-making happens over a long period but it bears profound fruit, which could not be imagined by the self that initially comes to the encounter.

In the light of Part I) iii) on the first seeing of the example, the necessary stage of undoing of the self, when its fixed identity is undermined and lost, can be understood. The servant will be restored in ways unimaginable to him as he lies there alone and in pain. This is a necessary step,

which the lord understands. Do we have to experience this terrible undermining of our *Gestell* self before it can be restored? Julian is struck by the loneliness of the servant as he lies, helplessly cut off from the lord's love; we can consider the Taylorian buffered self (Taylor 2007) having to negotiate relations rather than have the other confirm *a priori* relationality. E.O. Wilson writes of the coming Eremozoic era, the 'era of loneliness' (Wilson 2006 p 91) which humanity's denial of relationality with the natural world brings about. James Martin suggests that there will be a period of great stress, like a canyon through which humanity must pilot itself, when all the threatening ecological disasters will hit: global warming; rising oceans; emission of greenhouse gases; scarcity of water; growth of deserts; peak populations and mass migration (Martin 2007 pp 30ff). If Julian's example is true, then our experience of loneliness and struggle is only because we cannot turn our heads to face the love that is waiting and has held us all this time of trying to work out how to run the creation without God. We cannot turn our heads of our own volition: we have to realise our helplessness and pray. In that way, the world on the other side of Martin's canyon has the chance of being one of compassion, not of enmity, strife and ultimate final destruction.

In Part II) i) Julian gives her account of fallen man as he is shown to her at this stage of her understanding. He is bruised and heavy, in pain, unable to move, helpless, unable to think, almost (but not quite) forgetting the energetic flow of love between himself and God. He is alone. With his face turned away from the lord who loves him, and lying on his own, there is no interactive encounter. Fallen humanity is buffered and separate, lonely, cut off. And his location, the 'slade' which is his habitat in his loneliness, is 'long': we can read this chronologically as well as geographically. But it is also the precursor of restoration. In the great narrative in which humanity is in performative interaction with the Earth, there is perhaps terrible failing, with the best of intentions, before there can be restoration. The servant's 'slade' could be James Martin's canyon. The fossil fuel age came about with the best of intentions but now we should bring it to a close, with suitable mourning and gratitude for all it gave us, as George Marshall suggests (2014 p 232).

In order to learn, we had to fail, and the failure is what pricks our *Gestell* selves to make us look again at who and how we are.

In Part II) ii) where the servant is revealed to be not only Adam but also Christ, Julian sees that thereby the loving gaze of God is present, through Christ, in all the Earth. This showing, as it emerges in Julian's own seeing and as her text shows us, identifies Christ with the Earth that continually sacrifices for us, dying and being reborn through the seasons of the year, maintaining diverse life so we can live, making the air breathable by its continuous 'rotting and reviving' (Keller 2000 p 195), supporting us and providing means for shelter and for food. Julian sees the loving gaze of God shining through all the Earth, who through Christ takes his place in the Earth. Our realisation of this comes through participation.

Part II) iii) sees that the love between the lord and the servant is the Holy Ghost, thus establishing the Trinity in the niche. Adam's place is in the Trinity and his fall, which is also Christ's fall, is his interactive participation in the Trinity. The wounded everyman becomes less helpless. There is participation in the salvific act of Christ. There is a possibility that our feeble inability to perceive differently may shift, resulting in the discovery of a new niche of participative interactivity with the Earth that is not harmful.

Part III) i) considered the subjectivity of the servant that emerged from the fall, the fall thus being understood both as Adam's descent into hell and Christ's descent into incarnation, and both enacted out of eager obedience. The fall thus understood was longed for by all of heaven and all the Earth. This section underlines the theological turn of the Julian texts: in her eyes our salvation from *Gestell* subjectivity comes from a turn towards God. Thinking of the Earth as longing for the fall certainly removes any sense of it as an inert backdrop to human dramas. It is caught up in the narrative of creation-fall-redemption which for Julian is a single event. Its existence and our performative interaction with it are indelibly part of the story.

That the task is gardening, to which the servant is sent, was the subject of Part III) ii). The 'tru vnderstondyng' is realised not as a drama enacted with the Earth as a backdrop, but through and

in the Earth. The ecological crisis on these terms can be met in part by the realisation that desecration of the Earth is a denial of the Incarnation, and in part by the realisation that bringing forth the fruits of the Earth is Christlike work, and it brings us into interactive encounter with Christ who is identified with the Earth. Christ died and was reborn like the continuous rotting and reviving Earth. Out of the rotting comes new life.

Clothing and knitting in Part III) iii) provide a metaphor for the participative porosity of the servant as Adam and Christ, and of the participation of God with the Earth, so that as the servant is transformed through the fall, so is all the Earth. Julian recognises the body as being made of the ‘slyme’ of the Earth which includes all bodies, hence human materiality into which God is knitted involves all materiality. By this means the Earth may be re-enchanted, as Taylor would put it.

In the culminatory Part IV), the porous subjectivity of the Trinity and our sensual being, which is itself made of all the bodily matter of the Earth, suggests a cosmology that insists our attention to the Earth is also attention to God. God is worshipped by means of the Earth being gardened.

The ecological consciousness that emerges from the porosity learned from Julian’s response to the fourteenth revelation can be summed up as one which prays for understanding even as what it thinks it knows (for example that we are protected against the exigencies of the ecological crisis) is contradicted by what it sees (there are plenty who are not so protected): a consciousness that realises its own blindness. This fourteenth revelation-ecological consciousness sees the gifts of the Earth — breathable air, clean water, fertile soil — as the face of Christ expressing God’s love. Gardening that same Earth is humanity’s involvement in the salvific work of the Incarnation. Desecrating the Earth is a denial of the Incarnation. And if, as seems likely, there is to be a time of great ecological trial, then the Trinity is wholly involved and participatory as we pilot our way through Martin’s canyon of stresses to, we pray, a reborn, newly compassionate world.

CONCLUSION

Julian's Porosity as a Basis for a New Ecological Niche

Concluding proposals

This thesis has constructed an argument in response to the question: can the Julian of Norwich texts be read today in such a way that they can help address the twenty-first century ecological crisis, by transforming our 'buffered' subjectivity into the 'porous' subjectivity Julian brought to and learned from her revelations? The argument began by proposing that the ecological crisis is caused by humanity enslaved in a *Gestell* subjectivity that is buffered and adversarial, regarding nature as a utility in service of human ends, and its human self, too, as utilitarian. It suggested that the Julian of Norwich texts were able to address the *Gestell* cause of the ecological crisis, because the powerful language that Julian uses to describe her own porous encounter with her revelations can restore porosity in her reader, thus releasing him from captivity. The thesis then developed a post-Ricoeurian hermeneutical approach to reading the Julian texts that took account of their historical and manuscript challenges and foregrounded the text's transformative power to change the subjectivity of the reader. The post-Ricoeurian approach had a triadic structure which engaged with the text in a way that was performative, recognising that making sense of the text requires active, responsive engagement; porous, recognising that the reader is already a relational self and that performative reading will make that evident; and niche creating, recognising that the reading creates new worlds from a changed subjectivity. Using this structure, the thesis studied a number of themes and extracts from the Julian texts under the broad heading of 'wound', and the eighth and fourteenth revelations. At the close of each of these studies some initial expressions of an emerging porous ecological consciousness were offered, based on that chapter's reading. These began with the assertion that inasmuch as the study had demonstrated its capacity to restore porosity in the subjectivity of the reader, the Julian texts had already contributed to a response to the ecological challenge.

This thesis has not solved the ecological crisis. Its argument is that the ecological crisis is caused by *Gestell* subjectivity; facing the crisis requires a transformation of that subjectivity to one that is porous, not *Gestell*; the Julian texts have the power to do this. I hope I have demonstrated that the texts can have this power, but I have not *proved* empirically that they do. With the help of enactive science, it might be possible to conduct an experiment that could empirically measure porous responses: in the same way as Schilbach and colleagues conducted their face to face experiments, measuring responses in the brains of each of the participants, so they might be persuaded of the value of a study that measured the brain responses of a reader coming face to face with the Julian texts, and see if there was a similar stirring of ‘dark matter’ (Schilbach et al. 2013 p 394). That there would be such a stirring is the implication of Oliver Davies’ argument in ‘Learning Presence’ (2017). But suppose we were to conduct such an experiment and found that it was indeed the case that people respond to the text as we know they respond to a face to face encounter with other humans? Would we have all of humanity reading the Julian texts as a way of solving the ecological crisis? This in itself is a proposal that comes straight out of a *Gestell* perspective: we have identified a solution, proved it works in a controlled environment, so now let us apply it universally (on the *Gestell* assumption that humans, like nature, can be ordered about), and the problem will be solved.⁸⁷ My thesis is both more modest and more radical than that.

I have suggested, and I hope demonstrated, that the effect of the Julian texts on the reader can be to render him porous again. As she has enacted her porous, performative interaction with her revelations, so Julian has brought her reader with her, at no time claiming a special mystical status for herself but always ensuring her own subjectivity is as porous to her reader as it is to the Christ she meets in her revelations. Her invitation is to take up the text and read it as she ‘read’ her revelations; as Nicholas Watson puts it, with ‘slow, deliberative and prayerful’ attention (Watson 1992 p 96). There is a Ricoeurian discipleship called for: we are summoned to the text, to be changed by it, and as Merold Westphal noticed, this hermeneutical turn acknowledges and

⁸⁷ On this model, we could presumably simply make people look at each other.

underlines our fallibility and creatureliness (Westphal 2009 p 273). The ‘act of trust’ (Williams 2000 p 72) could also be construed as a cry for help from a subjectivity bound to *Gestell* and unable to free itself, yet recognising its need to escape. This is to open oneself to the possibility of a restored porosity. If the thesis has succeeded in demonstrating the text can effect a transformed subjectivity under these conditions, then it has shown that the Julian texts have something important to offer our twenty-first century selves that addresses the underlying need of the ecological crisis: that we must find again our deep relationality with each other and nature. This is my modest addition to the growing number of studies of the many ways of reading and learning from the Julian texts: I am ‘*in medias res*’ (Ricoeur 1995 p 91), with neither the first nor the last word on Julian. What is more radical is the suggestion that this transformation of self, which the Julian texts (but not only they) can bring about, is our only hope of continuing as inhabitants of Earth into and beyond this current century, in short, that the ecological crisis is calling humanity to a new way of being human.

If Julian is to be our guide, then the ‘new way’ is through porosity to God. And a number of the writers on whom I have drawn in this thesis are themselves convinced that the creation or restoration of a right relationship between humanity and the planet requires first of all an acknowledgement that our subjectivity is attuned to the sacred. Charles Taylor sees the porous self transformed into a buffered self as a result of humanity turning away from the sacred, as the medieval world view was replaced by that of the Enlightenment. Nature ceases to be ‘enchanted’. Of this turn, Ricoeur writes that ‘the retreat of the sacred’ is a ‘spreading desert’ (Ricoeur 1995 p 64), and Francis quotes his predecessor Pope Benedict: “‘The external deserts in the world are growing, because the internal deserts have become so vast.’” (Francis 2015 p 158). Francis calls for a ‘profound interior conversion’ (p 159) while Ricoeur asserts: ‘humanity is simply not possible without the sacred’ (1995 p 64). Both concur that the project of growth without limit is as a result, ironically, of humanity’s inability to be satisfied with only material things. We are not, in fact, just

consumers, even though we have claimed that nomenclature and predicated our economies on being such.

Choosing the Julian texts as one's route out of enslavement generates or regenerates an acknowledgement of the sacred, because Julian's niche is infused with God. At the conclusion of each chapter that studied the text there were specific expressions of porosity from Julian that gave shape to a new ecological niche, which can be summarised as wonder; contemplative looking; interdependence; identification with the Earth; gardening; humility; and gratitude. For Julian, these categories come out of her sense of the divine: her wonder is evoked by the wound of her longing for God; her contemplative looking is reverent dread of God; her interdependence is borne of a deep understanding of the materiality of the Incarnation of God; her identification with the Earth comes about by means of her understanding that Christ's face is manifest in the Earth as an expression of God's love for every part of it; and gardening is, for her, the work of Christ and humanity for God who wills the fruit of that labour; her humility and gratitude are evoked by God's greatness. In these concluding paragraphs, I shall explore porosity, the restoration of which is Julian's contribution to addressing the ecological crisis, through these categories and on Julian's theological terms.

Wounds, wonder, and identity with the Earth

Julian asked for wounds: for her they were a gift, one to which she remained open throughout her account, by means of her continued 'marvelling' or wonderment at what she was being shown, and also her reverent dread. The failure of the *Gestell* self to receive the natural world as a gift is a symptom of a world from which God has, in Taylor's terms, been 'top-sliced'. For some writers, the wounds of porosity to nature are made through a renewed wonderment at nature. Michael McCarthy writes of encounters with nature that evoke 'joy': for him there is no other word that can do justice to the feeling that is deeper than excitement or amazement, that touches him to the core. He first experienced it as a 15 year old boy, on the Dee estuary:

I stopped, sat down on the embankment and listened, and another [redshank bird] call drifted to my ears, and it suddenly seemed to be pulling everything together, this ethereal mournful fluting, all the beauty of the untouched estuary and the great skies and the distant mountains, all its richness of life, and I realised for the first time where it was coming from: the very heart of wildness [...] *it was wonderful*. I loved it with as intense a love as I had ever experienced, and there, sitting on the embankment, in the sunshine and the wind, with the wild calls drifting to my ears, I looked on the natural world, and I felt joy (McCarthy 2015 p 55, my italics).

‘It was wonderful’ evokes wounded Julian-porosity. McCarthy is not invoking God but his response to his encounter with nature, which became porous over the hour that he spent sitting on the banks of the Dee and remained porous thereafter, has the quality of a sacred connection to something greater that is discerned, not as distinct from the material, but within it. Evelyn Underhill articulates an unfailing connection of the material to God in her advice on contemplative looking. ‘From Alp to insect’, it does not matter what material thing you gaze upon, what matters is your ‘impassioned’ attentiveness, which ‘soon transcends all consciousness of yourself, as separate from and attending to the thing seen [...] for all things in this world towards which you are stretching out are linked together, and one truly apprehended will be the gateway to the rest’ (Underhill 1915/2000 p 48). Underhill, like Davies after her, calls this contemplation ‘intimate communion’ (p 49) and explicitly invokes Julian’s hazelnut which was ‘realised by her as the direct outbirth of, and the meek dependent upon, the Energy of Divine Love’ (p 52). Understood in this way, contemplative, wonder-filled looking at nature is not pantheism but a new means to penetrate to God. It has the same quality as Ricoeur’s summoned self, whose *cogito* subjectivity is undermined by the call of poetry, which is ultimately the call by and to the sacred. Julian’s looking has this quality of porous penetration: she is not satisfied until she has reached to the heart of the matter, which for her is God’s love: ‘wytt it wele, loue was his menyng’ (LT p 733.16). The challenging proposition from Julian’s porosity is that, without God, there is no generative

encounter: the Unmade cause of what is made is what energises. But Underhill, and McCarthy though perhaps not in those terms, would have us understand that contemplative seeing *will* kindle encounter with what is Unmade, wherever the seer starts from. We just have to be patient, and persist. For if the encounter does not penetrate through to what is Unmade, which is the shared, sacred origin of both, can it ever be porous? It remains a face to face meeting of two objects. But in fact this is not what happens (Schilbach et al. 2013). The face to face encounter does not remain buffered; and that itself is a sign of a shared origin. The sacred emerges.

The Julian texts are full of porous identities: that of Julian with her reader throughout; of Julian with Christ in the eighth revelation; of Adam with Christ in the character of the servant in the fourteenth revelation; and of Christ with the Earth, also in the fourteenth revelation. The porosity is illustrated by Julian's metaphor of being enclothed and of enclothing, and of the weave of the cloth itself in 'knitting'. As porous, performative encounter with nature penetrates through, if it is allowed, to the common, sacred, Unmade origin, so the interdependence of all that is made is also felt: '[o]ld barriers will vanish' (Underhill 1915/2000 p 48). In his postscript, added in 1957 to his book *I and Thou*, Martin Buber states that the central revelation he had had and had sought to describe was the 'close connection between the relation to God and the relation to one's fellow men' (Buber 1923/2013 p 87).

As we recognise our identity with the 'slyme' (LT p 558.43) of the Earth so we can interpret Christ's 'family', in his observation that in serving the 'least of these who are members of my family' we serve him (Matthew 25.40ff), as meaning not just other human beings. Pope Francis agrees: 'when our hearts are authentically open to universal communion, this sense of fraternity excludes nothing and no one' (2015 p 67). He quotes the Brazilian bishops who wrote that 'God has joined us so closely to the world around us that we can feel the desertification of the soil almost as a physical ailment, and the extinction of a species as a painful disfigurement' (p 66). Porous identification makes possible an understanding of what is to be done, as Francis challenges us: we

must 'dare to turn what is happening to the world into our own personal suffering and *thus* to discover what each of us can do about it' (p 15, my italics).

The porous identification of Christ with the Earth and with Adam's falling has a double meaning. First, the 'rotting and renewal' (Keller 2000 p 195) of the Earth in its seasonal round can be seen as a reflection of Christ's death and Resurrection, endlessly replayed as winter turns to spring and the promise of new life kindles a responsive awakening in the human heart that has not lost its connection by enslavement to *Gestell*. Michael McCarthy writes of the effect of hearing the cuckoo as the 'spring-bringer':

In Europe, it is one of the fundamental sounds of our world, the supreme signal of the soft days coming again [... but] there is something more. The spring-bringers stir in us something deeper than delight when we encounter them; [...] it is not simply the fact of their arrival, and the marking of the seasonal changes [...] In coming back year after year, against all the odds that they face, the spring migrants are testaments to the earth's great cycle. They remind us that, although death is certain, renewal is eternal, that although all life ends, new life comes as well.

Perhaps what they mean to us, really, is *hope* (McCarthy 2010 pp 8f, my italics).

Second, in Julian's terms, the identification of Christ with the Earth means the Earth is caught up in the falling of Adam and of Christ into Mary's womb and ultimately to death. The falling of the servant in the fourteenth revelation was into a hard and grievous place where he lay alone and unable to see the loving lord's unbroken gaze. I suggested an oblique reference to Christ's saying 'unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain, but if it dies, it bears much fruit' (John 12:24). The porous resonance of seasonal death and new life with the death and Resurrection of Christ can suggest an openness to a greater narrative for humanity, facing in this twenty-first century E.O. Wilson's Eremozoic Era: the era of loneliness, where humanity will have to struggle to survive, bereft of the 'ecological services' we did not realise we needed before destroying them.

The fall of the servant into the grievous 'slade' is analogous to James Martin's canyon:

Think of the twenty-first century as a deep river canyon with a narrow bottleneck at its centre. Think of humanity as river rafters heading downstream. As we head into the canyon, we'll have to cope with a rate of change that becomes much more intense — a white water raft trip with the currents becoming much faster and rougher — a time when technology will accelerate at a phenomenal rate. As the world's population grows, global tension and pollution will climb, and the danger of massive famines will increase [...] At the narrow part of the canyon, the world's population will be at its highest and the world's resources under their greatest stress (Martin 2007 pp 7f).

Martin's vision is that it is possible to pilot our way through the canyon in such a way that the world into which we are 'reborn' on the other side is a compassionate world; but this is not assured. As in the eighth revelation, and the fourteenth lord and servant narrative, there is no guarantee of Resurrection or redemption. All the servant knows, as he lies alone and blinded to God's love, is his own pain. But the fourteenth revelation is a quest narrative, not an enemy narrative. The servant falls into his great pain only to emerge into restoration in the Trinity; and the lord knows this. Adam is not the enemy, to be blamed and condemned and scapegoated. He is to be redeemed. So in turn the 'fall' of humanity into ecological depredation might be read as a quest, not an enemy narrative, as George Marshall has urged (Marshall 2014 p 231). Alex Evans proposes the Old Testament temple story of atonement and restoration⁸⁸ to fill the 'myth gap' he identifies in our failed attempts to make sense of the ecological crisis and how to respond to it (Evans 2017). Porosity of selfhood learned from Julian not only awakens us and makes us identify with the terrible suffering of the Earth, but also awakens us to the possibility of redemption, through the long journey that Ricoeur recognised of self transformation. Our response to the crisis is as described in the quest narratives: not to find someone to blame, but to look to our own transformation. This

⁸⁸ as described by Margaret Barker (Barker 2004).

response should not be mistaken for a retreat into individual piety and away from the world stage where the crisis will have to be faced. It is, rather, a call to start the enactment of response to the crisis from a new subjectivity. Writers such as Evans and Marshall have long experience of the campaigns and actions that have been tried, and which have more or less failed, in addressing the ecological crisis. They are not proposing surrender, but a different story, which can start now. In seeking our own transformation into porosity, we are immediately also engaging with the world differently. Every encounter becomes an opportunity for transformation.

Gardening

In the fourteenth revelation, the servant is sent by the lord to garden. The pre-lapsarian command to Adam to ‘till and keep’ the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2.15) is retold here with added texture and meaning. As Adam is sent to garden and falls into the ‘slade’, so is Christ by the same command sent to garden, and fall, in his case to fall and dig so deep that he reaches and releases the ‘grett root’ (LT p 542.300f) of Adam out of hell. For our twenty-first century ecological consciousness, porosity to the Earth is informed by this sacralising of our ‘gardening’ of the Earth as Adam’s sacramental and Christ’s redemptive work. Richard Sennett’s craftsman attuned to ‘wonder’ (Sennett 2008 p 211) might take his or her place in this reoriented way of ‘making’ that is in tune with the Earth, and Olivier Clément also recognises the sacralising effect of attentive, prayerful working with one’s hands (Clément 2000 p 122). ‘Tilling and keeping’ the Earth is being Christ’s hands, but it is also tending and attending to Christ whose creatureliness is identified with the ‘slyme’. Hence damage to the Earth is also damage to Christ. The harm that humanity is doing to the planet is an enactment of the Christian story. Christ is crucified again by our well-intended sin; his redemption of us could be, in this twenty-first century iteration, a restoration of the Earth itself as humanity is renewed and reborn into a porous way of being with the Earth that is our refuge and home, as Christ is.

Humility

The learning from Julian's revelations is that this ecologically redemptive work cannot be done by humanity alone, lying in the 'slade', blinded to God's love. The helplessness of our generation in the face of mounting evidence of the harm we are doing to the planet attests to this. Captive to our lonely, buffered, *Gestell* subjectivity, we cannot see how to change who we are so that the niches we create for our habitation and flourishing are no longer so harmful. How do we feed ourselves without the forced productivity of the soil that demands chemical intervention and exhausting (for both human and soil), multiple cycles of harvest?⁸⁹ How do we keep ourselves warm or cool against the exigencies of climate without fossil fuels?⁹⁰ How can we transport ourselves and our products?⁹¹ A complicated economy that has grown from a foundation of cheap, consistently available energy seems impossible to change.

The porous, Julian-taught response would be to pray. The 'drede of payne' that is an 'entre' to the one who is 'harde of slepe of synne' awakens contrition, making us porous enough to receive the 'soft comforte of the holy goste' (LT p 671.8). Our prayer is first of all penitent, without being able to point the finger of blame at anyone in particular, including ourselves. Rather our recognition is of the shared burden of harmful behaviour for which we are all, collectively, responsible, even as we know, like the servant in the fourteenth revelation, that we never intended harm. But the sorrow that arises from our porous identification with the harm and pain that has happened has a transformative power: not only does it increase our porosity to each other and the planet, it also creates porosity to God. A cry from the heart of our helplessness can have this effect. The beginning of our release from the captivity to *Gestell* is our realisation that we are unable to free

⁸⁹ Tudge cites artificial nitrogen as by far the most significant contributor to soil productivity (Tudge 2004 p 198).

⁹⁰ Highfield cites heating as responsible for 40% of fossil fuel use (Highfield 2017 p 36).

⁹¹ Transport accounts for 25% of fossil fuel use (Highfield 2017 p 36).

ourselves. This is Julian's wound of contrition, the wound of one who really knows his need. Only the contrite, humble self will be summoned to a restored porosity to God.

Gratitude

Julian's prayer also brings thankfulness. With the desacralising of nature by *Gestell* subjectivity came a loss of recognition of its gifts. We stopped seeing, and took for granted, the complex interwoven givenness of the Earth expressed in the spheres: the atmosphere which protects us and we did not make; the hydrosphere that hydrates and washes us and we did not make; the lithosphere that supports us and we did not make; the pedosphere which feeds us and we did not make; and the biosphere which gives life and we did not make. Attempts to recognise the value of the spheres from a *Gestell* perspective miss the point as we try, with the best of intentions, to put a figure on what they give us, commodifying 'ecological services' (McCarthy 2015 pp 25ff) and making them even more redolent of the 'standing reserve' that was the mistaken view of them in the first place. A price cannot be put upon clean air: we cannot survive without it; it is a precious gift we have been given; it has to be outside any negotiation; we have to thank God for it, and fiercely protect it.

Julian retains her loyalty to holy church and in the context of a porous ecological consciousness for the twenty-first century we can interpret her loyalty as a new niche of recognition of the importance of collective penitence and gratitude that organised religion enables. Formal, ritualised acknowledgement of the dependence of humanity on the gifts of the Creator has always been a part of culture: where is it to be found in a *Gestell* world where humanity has claimed its role as *homo faber* and denied its dependence on anything greater than itself?

Finally, our ecological consciousness born of porosity learned from Julian is fashioned by her experience of the Passion in the eighth revelation. Her porosity to the pain of Christ makes her porous also to the love which gave it birth and without which it would not have come to pass. And having repented of her regret for asking for Christ's pains in her own body, having suffered them and the love which bore them, Julian clearly acknowledges that heaven is in the 'vernacle'-ugly,

dying, bloody Christ on the Cross. In so doing, she travels with Christ from death into resurrected life: the same, bloody, dying Christ is the one who is suffused with joy. And so our porous ecological consciousness can learn from Julian that pain, love and joy are all to be found in one place, that our direction of travel is heavenwards, to what is Unmade, but it can only travel through what is made, it cannot deny, suppress, control or destroy materiality, but celebrate it and serve it, be thankful for it and love it, and therein find God, through whom all things came to be.

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